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Ping's Senate bet woos 'ghost' voters in Bicol

By Norman Bordadora

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Empty seat, love song for missing ferry passenger

By Rey Ebalane Ortega
(With Mindanao Bureau)

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New power crisis looms

It may be too late to prevent it in many parts of the country

By Abigail L. Ho and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

NO NEED to panic yet, but the Philippine power industry had better act now or face a nationwide electricity crisis by 2007, a senior executive warned.

First Generation Holdings Corp. president Federico Lopez said in an interview that the power woes in its current state, was not attracting newly needed investments to foothold additional capacity to avert crippling blackouts.

"We need to attract investments, but not on a piecemeal basis," Lopez told the business set Friday. "There is a need to fix the [power] industry as a stockpile model so investors will know where their capital will go and what returns they will get from their investments."

In a presentation to business executives, Lopez said the Philippines would need between $3 billion and $5 billion over the next five years to build power generation plants.

Since new plants could take at least four to five years to finance and build, Lopez said it might be "already too late to avoid crisis in many parts of the country."

In his presentation, Lopez said crisis would likely encounter a power shortfall by 2007, earlier than the government projected 2008 or 2009.

The supply shortfall would come even earlier in the Visayas and Mindanao as, right now, both island groups were already experiencing rotating brownouts due either to lack of actual supply or transmission problems.

Filipinos still remember the massive daily power blackouts, lasting up to 12 or more hours, which engulfed the country in the last years of President Corazon Aquino's administration and forced many government offices to work by candlelight.

Aquino's successor, Fidel Ramos, resolved the crisis after he took office in 1992 by allowing private firms to build new plants and leasing power barges. Eventually, the state firm National Power Corp. was the country's only supplier of power.

To attract foreign investments, Lopez said the Energy Regulatory Commission should vest away from politics and come up with truly independent directions.

Doing this would give potential investors a certain level of comfort and trust that industry regulators could not be swayed by political considerations.

Lopez said the investments that the sector needs to attract were not the small-scale ones that involved infusions in only one or two projects.

Ensuring an adequate power supply and reserves in the coming years should come from a combative investment

GOLDEN MOMENT: The shepherd's two Pinoy Popes reunite, Jaime Cardinal Sin marks his 50th year as a priest on Saturday with a concelebrated Mass at the Manila Cathedral attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo (during his reign) and former President Aquino. "Though unwell, the cardinal "has done well for the nation, for all of us and for the love he has and that we are sure were is not for the priesthood of the man of God," said Bishop Socrates Villegas in his homily. (Story on Page A3)

NO. 1 is his father's son. Ramon Fil S. Diaz of Sarangani (with mother Aurora) idolized his late father, Ricardo Diaz, also a lawyer who died in 2000.

NO. 2 Helen Navarro Suarez, formerly an international human rights advocate

Bar topnotcher says he was born to be a lawyer

By Philip C. Tubeza

LIKE THE hero of Virgily Samuel" after subscribe was named, but topnotcher Ramon Fil Diaz survived a family tragedy last week on to triumph and make his dream a reality.

Diaz, as told to friends, thought of getting up when his favorite uncle, Lito Diaz, the assistant general manager of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, was brutally murdered while he was taking the bar exams last September.

Fortunately for the law, Ami decided to study on, but the tragedy drove him from pursuing his dream of following in his father's footsteps and becoming a lawyer.

The 25-year-old Atty, considered a "dark horse" by his classmates, topped the bar exams with a grade of 86.55% percent.

A graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University law school, Ami said he had wanted to be a lawyer practically from birth.

"My son had to have me to go to law school. It was a decision I made the moment I was born," he said.

Or at least as soon as he reached the age of reason, he corrected himself.

Ami said he wanted to be a lawyer because his father, the late Rhodie Diaz, who was the officer-in-charge of Bureau of Customs in the Aquino administration, also was one. The elder Diaz died in 2000 while Ami was in law school.

"I looked up to my father. He was a lawyer. I could not see myself in any profession other than the legal profession," said Ami, who has been a junior associate in the influential Villaraza & Angeles law office for the past three months.

It was his father who named him after the Trojan hero of the "Aeneid," Virgil's epic poem that recounts the adventures of Aeneas who survived the sacking of Troy and wandered for seven years before settling in what is now Italy and becoming the reputed ancestor of the Romans.

"I did not really enter my mind that I would be No. 1. What I was praying for was to at least be at the top 10," Ami said.

While he expected to pass, he did not see himself landing on top as he recalled that after taking the test in one subject, he already felt confident that he had passed.

TWO VIEWS ON 'PASSION'

'Before true healing, we have to be wounded'

By Nestor U. Torre

JESUS: Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," set final members having a hard time approaching it on its own terms, since the controversy and media circus that have been surrounding it offer intense seduction and dangerous distractions.

But appropriate it on its own terms we must, as we have ourselves to concern more on the film as film. And we are rich is rewarded.

"Passion" tells us all too familiar story and picks up its narrative toward its climax, but it provides little background information to put the crucifixion in context—an indication that Gibson intends for film to be appreciated by people who are already believers, not prospective converts crowding desperately toward the light.

As such, Gibson's movie is valuable as a painful reminder of Christ's ultimate sacrifice for mankind, a gift of love and blood that are as often forgot.

Through the narration, the wounds of Jesus have become scars, and are no longer painful. But Gibson unintentionally risks those scars into fresh wounds again, to make Christ's sacrifice a renewed reality in our lives.

Here, he deviates in a decisive way from the modern texts that, after Christ's passion, the images of humanity's sins have already been paid, so we can now concentrate on savoring our forgiveness.

(REVIEW, A22)

'Jesus Christ suffered and died so we don't have to'

By Fr. Ferdinand R.S. Suroza
Contributor

The author is a professor of philosophy and theology at the Providence College in Rhode Island in the United States. He also served as chaplain of the University of the Philippines and taught at the Ateneo de Manila, De La Salle University and San Carlos Seminary. RIP.

DESPITE the criticism and controversy stories before its release in the United States, "The Passion of the Christ" proved to be an excellent film.

Critics feared it would revive anti-Semitism, and academics warned that many might mistake Mel Gibson's account of Christ's last 12 hours as "historical."

Both charges proved unfounded. The movie placed responsibility for Christ's death, not on all Jews, but on the Romans and Jewish leaders. I don't think people hated Jews after seeing the film.

But to inspire was unmistakably powerful. People were in an odd, meditative mood as they left movie theaters. In Texas, an elderly woman died of a heart attack in the middle of the film.

As to the critique of film scholars, Gibson conveyed that this was the passion told from the angle of his personal faith. He neither dismissed current biblical studies nor insisted that his movie was a "script" historical account.

I doubt that these issues will be raised when the movie begins screening in the Philippines. Most Filipinos will simply take it for granted that Gibson's account

"KAMIT HUNTING PASTINGIN"
Just like in the movies, there's a happy ending after a "misunderstanding" between Parliamentarian Pua Jr. and GMA 7 reporter Sandra Aguinaldo during a grand campaign rally at Freedom Park in Koh-Cty. (Story on Page A1)

A3
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2004
WEATHER FORECAST
Second FRONTPAGE

Palace: If Manila Water can do it, why can't Maynilad?

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

IF MANILA Water can run its house well, why can't Jose?

That was Malacañang's answer to claims by Rafael M. Alunan III, former president of the Maynilad Water Services, that the firm had been burdened from the start with a "flawed system," since taking over the water distribution system for the western section of Metro Manila in 1997.

Maynilad is a joint venture between the Lopez Group's Benpres Holdings and the Ayala-led Metro Pacific Investments Corp., while Manila Water, of the Ayala Group, runs the eastern service zone.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye abruptly schooled Alunan's statement blaming the government for the woes that led to Maynilad's decision to terminate its 25-year concession.

"Ang maganda nyan sa sinasabi ng kumpanya, eh, dyan sa east area, sa west area, dalat maalong magsabi sumasa ang palabiro dyan sa east area. Pilat na sa east area, sa west area," Bunye said in an interview over DMB's radio.

Alunan's complaint

"But anyway, those details are perhaps better answered by the MWSS," Bunye said, referring to the water firm Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, which used to handle the water distribution and sanitation for the two zones.

In a memo he issued in June 2003, Alunan complained that Maynilad was undone by the flawed water distribution system in its concession area, incomplete and corrupted data about the connections, and employees with an "anti-privatization" mind-set.

That was aggravated by regulatory instability and government interventions in Maynilad's economic fortunes, Alunan said.

In effect, he blamed the government for failing to sustain a stable regulatory and policy environment that Maynilad needed to deal with "unfavorable peso/dollar in its crucial years of infancy."

The company has had to defend its record following adverse public reaction to a proposed staggered rate adjustment between 2003 and MWSS, the state regulator.

No sweetheart deal

The deal, which calls for the MWSS to take majority control of Maynilad through a conversion of the utility's unpaid concession fees to equity, has been widely criticized, mainly by opposition politicians, as a bad, out of the pocket deal for the government.

Both President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Lopez family denied there was any bail-out or so-called "sweetheart deal."

The President, who is facing a tough election battle in May, said the government needed to take over Maynilad in order to protect the public from suffering disruptions in water supply.

In San Fernando City, Pampanga, a senatorial candidate of the opposition Nacionalista Party also asked the Ombudsman to suspend Rene Galvez-Muñoz, Maynilad's chairman and several MWSS officials for allegedly conspiring with government personnel in the MWSS concession agreement with Maynilad.

Lawyer Melissa "Sitsi" Morales, in an urgent motion, alleged that Technohar and MWSS officials conspired to conspire with the officials of the MWSS Regulatory Office "to prevent the discovery of their criminal and malicious intent and actions to bail out MWSS out of the financial mess." With a report from TJ Burgonio

Poe confirms INC meeting but claims he failed to get nod

By Christine O. Avendaño

JOLO CITY—Fernando Poe Jr.'s associates confirmed that he met with leaders of the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) on Friday but admitted he was not able to get a commitment of support from the influential religious group in his bid for the presidency.

Poe said he brought along his wife, movie actress Susan Roces, to the "courtesy call" with the INC officials.

The couple, who spoke with reporters in Jolo by Good Friday, did not say who they met with in the INC.

All Poe would say about the meeting was that the INC officials had asked him how his campaign across the country was going.

Asked if he got the INC's endorsement, Poe merely said, "Hindi naman eh."

Roces described the meeting with the INC as "cordial and it didn't last very long."

"It was like having a friend [whom] Fpjay knew was not exchange of ideas, an exchange of opinions about what's going on in the campaign and to the country," Roces told reporters.

Roces said she believed that the INC and all other sectors were still "studying which candidate to support."

Asked if her husband would ask, or meet with another influential religious group, the El Shaddai, Roces said this was up to Fpjay.

Last week, Presidential Management Assistant Corp. was ordered by reports that Poe had met with INC Executive Minister Eraño G. Manalo himself.

The President had sought to reach out with Manalo himself, but hadn't yet talked to get one. Manalo had not yet returned.

Michael T. Defensor, campaign spokesperson of the President said if it was true that Poe had been granted an audience by Manalo himself, then "we will respect that."

He said Manalo had expressed a willingness to hear the Republic next time.

"We shouldn't rest and feeling well, so the time has he told us he would receive the President the next time she paid a visit," Defensor said.

Defensor, who is the President's campaign manager in the NCR, said the meeting would happen soon.

Asked if he expected the INC to support the President instead of Poe, Defensor said: "I respect statement on that because the INC [takes its decisions] from time to time. Of course, like of course we are hoping [but] they will support [the President]."

With Julie Lobo, Jaeilbeen

'Other women' broke up union, says John O's ex

By Cassie E. Fernandez
Philippine Inquirer

CEBU CITY— Blaming other women, not men, was her former husband's rationale.

And so Sen. John "Sonny" Osmeña could not be gay, said Lucy Engelis Millen, who has taken up the cudgels for her former partner, who has been accused of having a male sex toyshop in Tagaytay City.

Millen, who has since remarried, told the Inquirer in a rare interview that the case of "other women" eventually caused the collapse of her marriage to Osmeña. They were together for seven years.

She has never found that Osmeña had had affairs with men, she added. "What I heard were mostly about the women."

"The accusation that he is gay is, to...borrow that politico is really dirty. It is a baseless attack. They have no issues against him so they come out with this," Millen said.

Osmeña and Millen were married on April 27, 1968, but separated in 1975, after divorcing in the United States. They have one child—Lobby Von Geo Arlen Engelis Osmeña "Arlen Arlen" Osmeña—who is running for governor under the administration's K-4 coalition.

Millen now heads the Cebu chapter of a public school teachers' network, Coalition with Net Interaction Toward Rich Flow to Cultural Values. She denies her support for her ex-wife's bid to move was dragged into the political quagmire of a regional election and in the nomination of rivals.

Atty. Gregorio San Antonio was involved in the case, although three of his staff members were alleged to be officials of a company that ordered the shipment.

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With Julie Lobo, Jaeilbeen

FPJ, TV reporter kiss and make up

By Christine O. Avendaño

BACOLOD CITY—The bus soon hits up close and personal for cute lil' jones, and so should you for that.

"FPJ is a genuine person but he is also a human being," his radio movie actress Susan Roces said yesterday in the rush hour set with the media to give an insight into the emotionally charged Fernando Poe Jr. The man she had been married to for over three decades, is all about.

And indeed the man whom Roces says is "a man of many" had kissed and made up with a television news reporter he had a falling out with while covering a rally for the opposition bet in Tagbilaran, Cebu on Thursday.

Roces went to apologize on behalf of Poe's emotional outburst with GMA 7 reporter Sandra Aguinaldo on Friday in Iloilo City. But she was shook hands and thanked each other politely.

Poe got flak for publicly "berating" Aguinaldo on Thursday night after the crowd near him while he was addressing a rally in Tagbilaran. Aguinaldo had said she was on stage to do a "stand up" or an on-the-spot commentary of the rally and did not mean to disrupt his speech.

Poe's allies said it was just a misunderstanding between the two, and that the matter is over and not newsworthy now here.

The newspaper said Aguinaldo broke a flock of media persons on the stage of the Freedom Grandstand in Iloilo City Friday night, apparently to close the ala.

"How are you?" he said, extending his hand to the reporter who accepted the gesture.

Poe again asked Aguinaldo how she was. The reporter then promptly ask him why he got mad with her Thursday night.

"I wasn't angry, said that's the truth," he insisted but, adding that he merely asked her relentlessly wanted to say something.

"Let's forget everything, if it's okay with you?" Poe told her. "Let's work together as partners normally. You do your job and I do mine."

Aguinaldo then took the opportunity to ask him about an earlier promise he had given that "When I win, I will grant an interview," he told her. Aguinaldo later said the "promise" was a request for a one-on-one interview with Poe.

"Ayan lang siguro nasumaktan niyo na rin nangkwan ang pag-usap kasi si Poe's emotional din at nadadamdamin sore sitta I had to do a stand again," Aguinaldo told her colleagues later.

Roces told reporters that her husband and Aguinaldo might have misunderstanding" as she stressed that both of them were right on the positions they had taken on the matters.

She said her husband acted the way he did because he had been stressed by what Aguinaldo said, but added it was part of her job.

However, she said that Poe's years of winning as an actor had taught him that "pag marami na kang nagsasabi ng ganyan" (If you are in the spotlight, it comes with).

Poe's administration congressmen, on the other hand, have questioned Poe's promise to be a peacemaker after he refused to apologize to Aguinaldo. With reports by Jr. Bahasa

Shell raises LPG price

PRICES of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.'s cooking gas rose by P1 per kg starting at 12:01 a.m. today.

An 11-kg cylinder of Shellane would now cost P11 more than the previous P1,016 to P1,026 each.

Shell price manager for refined oil affairs Roberto Ranada said the hike in prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) was a response to the rise in international contract prices (ICP) for LPG, the benchmark used for local retailers, by $27.50 per metric ton this month.

Ranada said in a phone interview yesterday that the increase in ICP from March to April was "abnormal" as most trade would indicate usually seen about $5 to $10 per metric ton.

"This is the first time in 10 years that the ICP from March to April increased. The market is affected by big users China and Japan, which hold off purchasing the products in February in anticipation of lower prices," he said.

Since prices showed no signs of letting up, he said, Chinese and Japanese suddenly bought their LPG requirements, thereby boosting the ICP.

Other oil firms selling LPG—including Petron Corp., Unioil Philippines Inc. and Total Philippines Corp.—have yet to release its their respective adjustments.

Petron officials said they were still evaluating the situation, and would announce an adjustment after a thorough review of the market.

But an industry source said the $27.50-per-MT rise in international prices translates to P1.37 per kg increase in local LPG prices, considering the current peso-dollar exchange rate. Abigail L. Ito

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Not singling out Muslims–Palace

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Saturday denied accusations that a crackdown on suspected Islamic extremists amounted to a campaign against the country's Muslim minority.

"There is no politics or ethno-religious discrimination in the government's anti-terrorism drive," Ignacio Bunye said, adding that the seven arrest of Muslims in Metro Manila was "based on information gathered by the intelligence community."

Some Muslim groups said relatives of the suspects had insisted the men were innocent but were forced to confess to involvement in the alleged bombing plot. AFP

For more details on Lakbay Alalay 2004 and expressway traffic updates, visit www.lakbayalalay.com or text LAKBAY to 2900 (for Smart/Talk N' Text/Abiss/Mobi subscribers or 2300 for Globe/Touch Mobile subscribers)

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Cops placed on heightened alert nationwide through summer

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By Alexis Pupa

THE PHILIPPINE National Police was placed on "heightened alert" yesterday to ensure the public's safety nationwide during the observance of Holy Week and the rest of the summer vacation season.

PNP Director General Reynaldo Dilosot Jr. ordered the 120,000-strong police force to undertake "a nationwide security and public safety plan" during the Holy Week to ensure the safe travel of motorists and commuters traveling by air, land and sea.

The nationwide security plan, dubbed "Oplan Bantay Lakbay," involves mandatory security checks at airports, seaports and bus terminals.

According to PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, Oplan Bantay Lakbay also involves the setting up of police assistance centers (PACs) along the national highways. The PNP's Traffic Management Group will spearhead road safety operations.

The police assistance centers will serve as "quick-reaction points" for police emergency and medical response and to advance command posts for traffic management and rescue operations. All PACs will be linked through the nationwide hotline Patrol 117.

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Frail Cardinal Sin marks golden jubilee as a priest

By Marlon P. Ramos

THE [illegible] Jaime Cardinal Sin, hailed as the religious leader of two people power revolutions, marked his golden jubilee as a priest yesterday in a Mass attended by the two main beneficiaries of his twin Edsa events—President Macapagal-Arroyo and former President Corazon Aquino.

Sin, who suffers from a kidney ailment, was wheeled to the altar of the Manila Cathedral on a special platform.

His responses were inaudible in some parts of the concelebrated Mass attended by 41 bishops and some 300 priests.

He also failed to read his prepared message.

Unwell

"He is not well but he made us well," said Bishop Socrates Villegas (whose homily, titled "Power in Weakness," was a tribute to Sin).

Villegas revealed that Sin had not actually been well the past 16 years as he suffered [illegible] strokes, underwent emergency stomach surgery in 1981, contracted a severe form of cholera just 10 years later, which nearly claimed his life, and now suffers from a kidney ailment.

"And yet the reality is he has done so well for the Church. He has done so well for the nation. He has done well for all of us and we could be less well than we are now were it not for the providence of this man of God," Villegas said.

If Sin had been well enough to read his message yesterday, these present would have seen flashes of his familiar wit.

Rich

The piece titled "I am rich" was distributed to the media.

In it, Sin said he had seen many children like cities, ruby pearl and sapphire. He said he watched his diamond wear when he turned 75 last year and became "golden" the year of his 50th year as a priest.

"If only for these jubilees, I am a [illegible] man. I am rich," he said.

In the same encouraging document, he said that he would not be able to relate his life story without mentioning Edsa.

"It is the most important chapter of my life. I wished finding serene joy and calm in being called the 'Cardinal of the Edsa revolution.' I do not claim that to a right. It is a grace that I do not deserve at all. It is a blessing to have seen the Archbishop of Manila at that moment in history," he said.

Pride

Seen clear by his retinue, Sin said that he can look at his cross and the nation with a deep sense of pride and gratitude.

"I have given my best. I have run the race to Pentecost. I met foes from wounded to bombs but the world has become a bit more rewarded by my years on this e. Thanks to God," he said.

Sin entered on his 75th birthday last year.

Laguna Lake wins international hosting honor

By Jerry Esplanada

LAGUNA de Bay, the country's largest lake, will host next year's international conference of the prestigious Living Lakes network, marking the distinction over Brazil's Pantanal, the world's largest wetlands, and Poland's Milkus Ponds.

Top officials of the Germany-based environmental organization picked the 90,000-hectare Philippine lake as the venue for the gathering of more than 100 lake conservation experts and representatives of the global network during its conference held recently in Norwich, England.

Also reported to attend are hundreds of Laguna's stakeholders.

Laguna de Bay's elaboration in Living Lakes in August 2003 during the Lake Rabisi, Russia conference has brought its conservation efforts to world-wide attention.

"Hopefully at the 2005 conference, inputs from other Living Lakes partners would help make Laguna de Bay not just a living lake but visitors-friendly lake," said Arie Lucassen, project manager of the factory for the Germany-based Philippine Partnership (GPH). "It will be an opportune time for us to share awareness in a modified lake that needs all the help it can get from its partners here and abroad."

The GPH is one of the active members of the tripartite Clean (Conservation of Laguna de Bay's Environment and Resources), with Unilever Philippines and the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as partners.

The tripartite, a "first in the history of Living Lakes," was considered a network model of how the government, non-government organization (NGO) and the business sector can work together under one vision.

Chito Mangaoil, Unilever Philippines general manager for corporate development, said executing the lake's sustainability initiatives under the "environment challenges."

Clear launched in June 2003 a road show campaign in Laguna lakeshore towns aimed at promoting conservation efforts.

This was followed by the holding of the first-ever lake stakeholders conference where Unilever Philippines chair and its first executive officer Bernard Belton noted that the welfare of Laguna de Bay described as a "dying lake" by former LLDA General Manager Celinio Concepcion, was the primary focus of collective efforts.

A million table foods, "Laguna de Bay: The Living Lake," was also published by Unilever.

Barely a year after joining Living Lakes, Laguna de Bay was finalized as a "best practice" example of lake sustainability initiatives by the global network, sharing the honor with Lake Constance in Germany, recognized for and Switzerland and Asahi Hibiscus in Lucia wetlands park.

Laguna de Bay's other living Lakes partners are Mono, California, USA; Lagoa, Paraguay; Colombia; Mar Chiquita, Argentina; Nordvik, Schleswig-Holstein, Belarus; La Nava, Spain; Norne, Greece; Lavache, Morocco; Ohrid, Turkey; Issyk Kul, Israel; Tengis, Kazakhstan; Biwa, Japan; Matahara, Indonesia; Xingong Hu, China; Chapala, Mexico; Victoria, Kenya; Tonnyo, Nepal; Eyasi, and the Columbia River see Jessica Canada, this year's host.

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DepEd warns of 'review classes' scam

By Dona Pazcoguin

EDUCATION Secretary Guillermo de Jesus has warned incoming high school freshmen against falling for schools marketing private review centers offering so-called "review classes" or a way out of having to take the new five-year high school course.

Sec. de Jesus said taking such classes was no guarantee that students would not have to undergo the one-year "pre-high school bridge program," the new high school curriculum being introduced by the DepEd for its coming freshmen.

Dr. Jesus also reassured public school officials against mounting clamor from review centers.

Beginning in June, public high schools are to start a five-year curriculum called the "five-second's Bridge Program" which will add an extra year between sixth grade and first-year high school.

The DepEd said the extra year would enable students to master their elementary English, literacy and Math subjects, before going on to take high school subjects.

All incoming first-year students of public high schools will be required to take the High School Readiness Test (HSRT) scheduled for May 14.

Based on his or her test result, a student either undergoes an extra year of pre-high school, or proceeds directly to first-year high school curriculum.

Dr. Jesus said his office has received reports that several private firms were offering review classes for the HSRT.

"Some use the slogan, 'Why take the bridge when you can pass the test?'," he said in a memo on March 12.

He said the DepEd does not and will not endorse "any review classes for any commercial undertaking."

He advised students and their parents to find out first if these review centers had legal permits, competent reviewers and good facilities.

"It cannot be overemphasized that taking the review classes does not ensure success in the HSRT, especially if such classes are of poor quality," he said.

Some students and parents have protested the "added burden" of an extra school year under the new five-year curriculum.

The Alliance of Concerned Teachers has called the bridge program a "waste of time and resources" because of its allegedly doubtful effect on students' academic standings.

Water interruption in portions of Quezon City, San Juan, Mandaluyong, Pasig due to water improvement project

Manila Water announced it will conduct several activities on maximizes along EDSA and Sankaban to upgrade and improve water distribution from the Balara water treatment plants.

The water cutoff will be from **12:01 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Tuesday, April 6, 2004.**

Affected areas are:

San Juan: Once, Tibagan, Maytunas, Isabelita, Little Baguio, Hagdang Bato, Sto. Niño, Pasadena, Valencia, Corazon De Jesus, and Greenhills.

Mandaluyong: Wack-Wack, Pleasant Hills, Addition Hills, Hagdang Bato, Libis, Mauway, Highway Hills, Mataray, Barangka Drive, Barangka Ilaya, Barangka Ibaba, Barangka Itaas, Buayang Bato, Plainview and Hagdang Bato Itaas.

Pasig: San Antonio, Oranbo, Kapitolyo and Valle Verde 4 & 5.

Quezon City: Horseshoe Drive, San Martin, Bagong Lipunan, Camp Crame, Camp Aguinaldo, Immaculate Conception, Socorro, Murphy, St. Ignatius, White Plains, Corinthian Hills, Corinthian Gardens, Pinagkaisahan, Mariana, Kristong Hari, New Manila, Kalusugan, upper portion of Green Meadows, Valle Verde 6 and part of Project 4.

Residents are advised to store enough water prior to the schedule of the water interruption.

Manila Water

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SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER A7

Suit tags US in gold caper

ATLANTA, Georgia—A lawsuit claims the US government helped steal possibly trillions of dollars in gold from an amateur Filipino treasure hunter.

Sounding like something right out of an Indiana Jones movie, Atlanta attorney Bill Stone insisted: "The government has done stranger things."

Court documents state that Roger Roxas, an amateur treasure hunter, reportedly found the Yamashita Treasure, which included a one-meter high Buddha made of gold and boxes full of gold bricks, the documents said.

Court documents state that between 1971 and 1974, then President Ferdinand Marcos ordered his agents to torture Roxas into revealing the location of the gold. Stone, an attorney for Golden Buddha, an Atlanta corporation now pursuing Roxas' claim against the government, said the US government helped the Marcos regime remove the gold from the Philippines and convert it.

Stone said his firm and a San Francisco attorney have gathered documents, taken depositions and have determined that the Americans involved "were working under the auspices of the CIA." *AP*

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Christ's entry into Jerusalem recalled

By Marvin P. Mortillaro and Minerva Gonzalez, Reporter

CEBU CITY, Philippines (AP)—Palm Sunday today marking the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem as shown of "Hosanna" and crowds waving palm fronds in greeting.

Many Christian churches around the world re-enact Jesus' return to Jerusalem with a procession. In the Philippines, priests bless coconut palm fronds with holy water, a tradition dating back to the 16th century when Spanish colonizers introduced Roman Catholicism and its rituals.

The fronds blessed on Palm Sunday are taken home by the faithful and used as a sacramental. They are placed in prominent places in the house around religious statues and other objects. They remain there for a year until the next Palm Sunday when they are replaced by newly blessed palms. The ashes used in Ash Wednesday rites are taken from the prior year's palms or fronds.

Pope John Paul II, in his Palm Sunday homily in April 2003, said that today's celebration begins with "Hosanna!" and ends with "Crucify Him!"

Those words, probably shouted by the same people and within a few days, sum up the two events being recalled by the faithful today, the triumphant entry of Christ in Jerusalem and his passion and death a few days later.

Archbishop Fernando Capalla, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines president, appealed to willingness and lay leaders to preserve the solemnity of the religious rites and observe the message of the season.

"I am appealing to my brother bishops and priests, the religious and lay leaders who are actively engaged in ceremonies of Holy Week...Be meticulous in the observance of the liturgy (and) I think there are ... practices that can be avoided," Capalla said.

He was referring to people who join religious processions and play the motions of the cross, beat talk and laugh among themselves.

He warned those refraining to those who dramatize Christ's passion but remain detached from His sufferings.

"Something is lacking ... Christ talks about justice, caring, honesty ... (we should) use Holy Week to [spread] the teachings of the Church," he said.

In Davao, they launched "Kumpilan ng Bayan" where priests serve as the neighborhoods to hear confessions.

Capalla said he was happy everyone have decided to show the theme "The Passion of The Christ" and touches the hearts of people.

Dante Ang, former CBCP president, said Palm Sunday is the time for Catholics to reflect on their faith which is based on the passion, death and resurrection of Christ.

"Like Christ, we Catholics should not only dwell on our sufferings and sorrows, but also our victories," Ang told reporters.

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week, also called Passion Week. Its most solemn and intense period of worship in the Christian world, which culminates in the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday, the cornerstone of the faith.

PNP opens probe of NAKTF culpability in shootout

By Nikko Paja

THE PHILIPPINE National Police is investigating whether operatives of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (NAKTF) followed the rules of engagement in their shoot-out Friday that killed the members of the Abbu Sayyaf kidnap gang.

The shoot-out, which took place on a secluded street in Sasmuan, resulted in the killing of 4-year-old Jennifer Gallardo and four of the suspected kidnappers, and the wounding of 13 other people, including five children.

"We want to see if there was adherence to the rules of engagement," PNP Director for Operations Avelino Razon yesterday told the Inquirer.

He said the National Capital Region Police Office, through the Northern Police District, was looking into the matter as a standard operating procedure after a shoot-out.

Razon said the "relative positions" of the suspected kidnappers and the NAKTF agents would be examined to determine the trajectory of the bullet that killed Gallardo.

If it is found that the fatal bullet was fired by a NAKTF operative, homicide and other charges will be filed, Razon said.

On Friday, President Macapagal-Arroyo said the government was taking full responsibility for the killing of Gallardo and ordered an investigation.

She also said the NAKTF under ex-Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and the PNP should review the rules of engagement.

'Like Lacson'

Ousted President Joseph Estrada said the killing of the child, the alleged bungled operations, and the reported "staged-managed kidnappings" by the NAKTF had put Reyes in the same situation as that of presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Estrada said in a phone interview that Reyes was now being subjected to the same accusations thrown at Lacson when he was head of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission and, later, PNP chief.

But Estrada said that while the charges against Lacson were not true, those against Reyes could be real.

"Maybe shooting outside (the dispensary) wasn't so grab (the limelight)," Estrada said.

He dared Reyes to go after the kidnapping syndicates' financiers and backers, and not just the "small fry."

But Sen. Loisa Jacinto Ramos, widow of a supposed civilian agent and close-in bodyguard of Reyes, charged him and several ranking military and police officials before the Ombudsman with killing her husband and staging the kidnap and rescue of certain persons to gain the favor of the Chinese-Filipino community from which they hail.

Ramos yesterday phoned the Inquirer to say that she had been receiving death threats since she filed the case. Reports from Acme Pape, Armand H. Nocum, Michael Lim Ubac and Cynthia D. Balana

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, April 4, 2004
Passion Sunday

1st Reading: Is 50:4-7

The Lord Yahweh has taught me so I speak as his disciple and I know how to sustain the weary: morning after morning he wakes me up to hear as a learner like a disciple. The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear: I have not rebelled, not been a stubborn.

I offered my back to those who strike me, my cheeks to those who pulled my beard; not even my face I shield my face from blows, spittle and disgrace. Help me, the Lord Yahweh comes to my help.

So, like a flint I set my face, knowing that I will not be disgraced.

2nd Reading: Phil 2:6-11

Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped but emptied himself, taking on the status of a slave, and made in human likeness; and in his appearance found as a man, he humbled himself by being obedient to death, death on the cross.

That is why God exalted him and gave him the Name which stands above all names, so that at the Name of Jesus all knees should bend in heaven, on earth and among the dead, and all tongues proclaim that Christ Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel: Lk 22:14-23:56

The whole council rose and brought Jesus to Pilate. They gave their accusation: "We found this man inciting our nation to rebellion, opposing payment of taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be Christ the King."

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "You said so." Turning to the chief priests and the crowds, Pilate said, "I find no basis for a case against this man." But they insisted, "All the country all the time is being stirred up with his teaching. He began in Galilee and now he has come all the way here."

When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. Finding the accused to come under Herod's jurisdiction, Pilate sent Jesus away to Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time.

Herod was delighted to have Jesus before him now for a long time he had wanted to see him because of what he had heard of him, and he was hoping to see Jesus work some miracle. He pelted a question upon question, but got no reply from Jesus.

All the while the chief priests and the Scribes were energetically stating their case, presenting their accusations. Finally, Herod ridiculed him and with his guards mocked him. And when he had put a white cloak on him, he sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate, who were enemies before, became friends from that day.

Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers before all the people, and said to them, "You have brought this man before me as one who misleads the people. I have examined him and found no basis for your charges. And neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. It is quite clear that this man has done nothing that deserves a death sentence. I will therefore have him scourged and then release him." (On the Passover Pilate had to release a prisoner to them.)

Heading as one man, they protested: "No! Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us." (This man had been thrown into prison for an uprising in the city and for murder.)

Pilate addressed them to release Jesus; he appealed to the countless many, but they shouted back, "To the cross with him! To the cross!" A third time Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? There is no crime deserving death has been proved. I shall have him scourged and let him go."

But they were so shouting and demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their shouts grew louder. So Pilate decided to pass the sentence they demanded. He released the man they asked for (he was one who was in prison for rebellion and murder), and he delivered Jesus in accordance with their wishes.

When they led Jesus away, they seized Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the fields, and laid the cross on him, to carry it behind Jesus.

A large crowd of people followed him, among them were women bewailing their fortune and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Women of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For the days are coming when people will say: 'Happy are the women without children, happy are those who have not given birth or nursed a child!' And then will begin to the mountains: Fall on us! And to the hills: Cover us!" For if this is the fate of the green wood, what will happen to the dry?"

Along with Jesus, two criminals also were led out to be executed. There at the place called The Skull he was crucified together with the criminals – one on his right and another on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do." And the guards cast lots to divide his clothes among themselves.

The people stood by watching, as for the rulers, they jeered at him saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, let he is the Messiah, the chosen one of God!"

The soldiers also mocked him and when they drew near to offer him bitter wine, they said, "Do you are the king of the Jews? Save yourself!" For above him was an inscription which read, "This is the King of the Jews."

One of the criminals hanging cursed Jesus insisted him, "So you are the Messiah? Save yourself and us as well!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Have you no fear of God, you who received the same sentence as he did? We have it right; we are getting what we deserve for what we have done. But this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied, "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

It was now about noon. The sun was hidden and darkness came over the whole land until afternoon, and as that time the curtain of the Sanctuary was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying out, cry, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And saying that, he gave up his spirit.

The captain on seeing what had happened, exclaimed, "Clearly this was an upright man." And all the people who had gathered to watch the spectacle, as soon as they saw what had happened were home beating their breasts. Only those who knew him stood at a distance, especially the women who had followed him from Galilee; they witnessed all this.

Commentary

"He changed water into wine(a)," wrote Clement of Alexandria (died 200 AD). He changed the meaning of death. By disciples, by reason of the memory and knowledge of him, could even see towards it. Ignatius of Antioch (died around 107 AD) wanted to be "a follower [imitator] of God." In a letter to the Christians in Rome, where he was being brought bound to be thrown to the beasts in the Coliseum, he wrote, "Grant to me other ready for me, that I may attain; bring them, I entreat you, that by their means I may attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread" (Letter to the Romans 4:1).

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Sunday SPORTS

Sta. Lucia beats undermanned Shell

By Jure Navarro

WITHOUT Ronald Tubid and Chris Calaguio on the floor, the Shell Turbochargers couldn't get their usual fiery game going.

STA. LUCIA'S Dwight Brown slam-dunks.

Sta. Lucia Realty capitalized on the situation as the Realtors defeated the Turbochargers, 100-92, last night in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Philsports Arena.

The usually explosive Tubid sat out the entire game nursing a left ankle injury while Calaguio, the Turbochargers' top scoring local, came in plenty but after having his leg dusting Chris conspired of the Batangas Tourbuilding a week ago.

Sans Tubid and Calaguio, the Turbochargers never denied an average of at least 32 points and seven rebounds, allowing the Realtors to wrap up the first round with a 2-1 record.

Compounding matters for the Turbochargers was the absence of playmaker Rabati Pervanta, who stole the hearts the entire second half due to a strained left foot.

Jimmy Bajar effectively quarterbacked for the Turbochargers but the Realtors, reeling from a shameful defeat at the hands of the Profilo Zapatos, relentlessly pummeled them inside the paint.

"My team realized that we played bad against Profilo and I'm glad that they did everything possible on both ends of the floor to recover from that loss," said Sta. Lucia Realty coach Alfonso Chua.

Dennis Espino headed aside a battling back and came up with 23 points and nine rebounds while Marlon Aquino, so far one to rebounding the last eight games, rediscovered his aggressiveness in the attacked lane.

Prior to the game, the 6-foot-5 Aquino averaged 5.6 rebounds in 27 minutes per outing.

Actually there are 15 local players who are averaging more rebounds and fewer playing time than Aquino, including Batangas Tourbo's 6-foot-10 Mark Cagguio (6.1 rebounds).

Last night, Aquino made amends, pulling down 11 rebounds, five of them offensive in 40 minutes of action.

"They (Aquino and Espino) woke up from deep. Now, they are more aggressive on offense and defense while the team moved the

SEE LUCIA A-6

URBL taps Fernandez as its first commish

MARCIO Fernandez assumes as the basketball czar in commissioner of the newly formed United Regional Basketball League.

The four-time PBA MVP and former commissioner of the defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association agreed to assume the post after being oriented with URBL provisional board and grassroots development concept.

Fernandez, acknowledged as one of the country's best players ever, believes that the URBL will be able to develop young players from the countryside as well as provide an avenue for players on the sidelines.

"The URBL is not the NBA, but I believe the regional concept being relived will help grassroots development and regenerate basketball interest throughout the country," said Fernandez.

In a mock corporation, each URBL franchise will gain a seat on the board of directors, allowing team owners direct participation within the corporation, thus assuring the all league revenues will be shared equally among the participating members.

New power crisis ...

From page A1

climate in the industry as a whole, he said.

Lopez formula

Lopez raised the same warning in a briefing to the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) last week, saying the only way to avoid the return of chronic blackouts was to allow power utilities—like the Lopez-controlled Manila Electric Co.—to connect their own new power supplies.

He told the businessmen a power crisis, aggravated by a debt crisis, would surely spell an economic meltdown for the Philippines.

The Lopez outlook has irked Energy Secretary Vince Perez for being too alarmist, while the solution the Meralco executive proposed raised fears among businessmen that it would lead to more "sweetheart deals," such as that, they said, between Meralco and Lopez-owned power plants.

Perez told the business: "It's a bit puzzling for me that they have been going around making these presentations practically to everybody except us. We don't like to scare the public. That is not our style at the DOE (Department of Energy). As long as we work together, we can avert a power crisis."

Buying time

Lopez said additional capacity should have already been installed in the Visayas and Mindanao as early as last year.

For those parts of the country, he said in his presentation, it might already be too late to avoid a crisis situation.

Lopez stressed, however, that even if Pangilinan's independent study of the industry revealed as an estimated supply shortfall by 2007 in Luzon, the government could still "buy us some time to push out the 2007 reckoning date for Luzon businesses."

According to Lopez's presentation, some of the solutions that could help the industry move time included government's preparedness to restructure unsolicited or decommissioned plants, voluntary load curtailment by big power users, and the timely completion of transmission line projects.

Also, since the industry was not attracting necessary investments to build new plants or increase capacity in existing ones, the government should involve "interested time" wholly or in part to further downgrade the current state of the industry, Lopez said.

Don't give in to populism

He suggested that the government not give in to the "populist calls," like it did two years ago when the Supreme Court stopped the rate adjustment (PPCA) was capped at 40 centavos per kilowatt-hour.

The PPCA cap drove down the state firm's revenues, further expanding its losses and pushing it to borrow even more.

As a result, he said, the power industry "increased into a shell," not exerting any effort to explain the full implication of the cap and at the same time not infusing any more new investments into the industry.

"We should fix the power industry and get reforms back on track," he said.

4 options

The Florida presentation laid down four options to prevent an acute power shortage:

Let the government build its own plants for the government to sell new deals with independent power producers, let the private sector build merchant plants, and let power utilities choose from whom they will buy their supply.

Lopez told businessmen that the first two options involving the state were not feasible because of its huge debts and ballooning budget deficit and the time mandates the privatization and deregulation of the power industry.

Lopez stressed out the third option, the construction of merchant plants, because it was unfettered by investments.

Were disagreed, saying several investors had expressed keen interest in putting their money into merchant plants.

"We think merchant plants are a viable option to solve the power crisis, which is why we are explaining this area," Perez said.

Only viable alternative

Lopez said the only remaining viable long-term option, compatible with privatization and deregulation, was for power utilities to contract their own new power supplies.

An FPI member, Flora Penag of the Philippine Wood Producers' Association, warned that allowing that might result in "sweetheart" deals if the utilities were allowed to own the new power suppliers, similar to the controversial deals between Meralco and Lopez-owned power generation firms.

Lopez argued that "the issue was not actually Meralco's fault because, he claimed, Meralco was compelled to buy power from independent power producers.

Perez said that, while he agreed that allowing power utilities to choose their suppliers was a viable option, the utilities should ensure that all three deals go through competitive bidding.

Spooking investors

But Lopez warned that that option could only be reachable if the government got its act together and addressed the uncertainty in the regulatory environment which, he said, was a main concern of foreign investors.

Lopez lambasted regulators for their myopia ("We need competent regulators at ERC who can quickly acquire a stern of the issues"), lack of independence and their time for consumers ("Consumers growing addicted to subsidies and profits demonized.").

He said threats of eminent seizure and reorganization, such as official, executive and legislative intervention to legislate matters, had spooked lenders.

Lopez also pushed forward Meralco's weakened financial condition which, he said, had undermined its ability to fund capacity expansion. He noted that Meralco had suffered through eroding returns, shrinking capital investments and rates credit downgrades in the last four years.

Businessmen should work together with Meralco to push for the removal of cross subsidies given to residential consumers in order to ease the burden on industrial users, Lopez suggested.

Lenten power supply ample, says Napocor

By Abigail L. Nio

THE TEXTILE/RO National Power Corp. has assured the public that there would be ample power supply during the Lenten break despite an expected surge in demand due to the five-day Holy Week vacation.

Lucio Tan's Philippine Airlines Corp.'s (Chairman) systems operations department showed that power supply in the Luzon grid would be around 2,080 megawatts (MW) per day from Holy Wednesday to Easter Sunday (April 7-11).

This means that after serving the total demand for the Luzon grid, there would still be enough backup power to meet some spikes in demand in any of those five days.

The Visayas grid would maintain peak reserves of 401 MW per day while the Mindanao grid would have average back-up electricity of 240 MW.

"Barring any unforeseen technical failures, NPC assured that there will be no, or brownouts during the Holy Week," the Napocor said in a statement yesterday.

Lowest demand on Good Friday

Historically, power demand on Good Friday is the lowest during the entire year, as industries and businesses reduce their working hours or altogether stop their operations.

But with the five-day break from work during the Lenten season, demand was still expected to stay on track and even spike on non-workers going to vacation spots all over the country.

Meanwhile, Transco recently launched certain components of the Luzon-Bohol interconnection project, which will provide the Visayas grid with an additional 200 kilometers of 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines as well as substation capacity.

The interconnection will start from the Ormoc Central Station in Ulay Substation in Northeastern Bohol via the Mandaue Substation in Southern Leyte.

This aims to provide dependable power supply in Southern Leyte as well as Tramsco's dependable and clean power from geothermal energy-endowed Leyte to Bohol.

"The existing 69-kV single-circuit, steel-pole-supported transmission line in Southern Leyte are nearly saturated. Transco is upgrading it to provide viable solution with the installation of additional transmission lines and more substation capacity," Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said in a separate statement.

Bar topnotcher says he was born ...

From page A1

he would remember the members by heart "and my confidence would be shaken."

Aneri won a consistent honor student since grade school. He was "salutatorian" from elementary to high school and skipped Grade 7 at La Salle Greenhills. He finished fifth in his high school class in 1999.

'Carefree' college

Aneri then took business economics at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, graduating cum laude. He said he enjoyed the freedom of his "carefree" college years.

"I really had fun when I was at UP. I was having the time of my life," he said.

That was in charge when he took up law at the Ateneo.

"The culture is different in law school. You have to gradually give up your favorites like gimmicks. You have to focus on your studies," Aneri said.

He said he decided to go to the Ateneo de Manila University for the "discipline" (campus was near his Makati home. He also wanted to know what a Jesuit education was like.

"It's very balanced. You have spiritual development. You learn that you can only do so much to come at study and the rest will be up to God," he said.

"It's like for exams. You can only do so much preparation and then, after you take the exam, it's no longer up to you.... It's up to him. That's one of the things I learned," he said.

Dark horse

Aneri said he graduated 14th in his batch and was considered a "dark horse" by his classmates.

"My friends were teasing me that I was the dark horse. My non-law school friends from La Salle and UP said that I would not only pass, 'Di ka aasabaha ka na rin ng 10,'" Aneri said.

This considerably boosted his confidence, making him actually imagine and hope that it would happen.

But Aneri almost did not make it.

Tragedy struck when Lilia Chan was admitted on his way to work on Sept. 9, 2003. The bar exams had just started.

Aneri was greatly affected by the incident but tried to control his grief.

"In fact, my mother did not know I considered I might stop taking the exams. Although not seriously ... I was, indeed it as an option for a while," Aneri said.

"The challenge then really was to keep my focus on the more important things in front. If there's anything I regret, it was that I could not grieve. Because I thought if I grieved too much, it could very well

Took up law for grandma

By Jenelle A.B. Batilla
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BELISIA Beatrice Gomez of Davao City, who placed eighth, is a former international flight attendant who left only some to law school four years ago to please her grandmother.

Gomez, a graduate of medical-primary studies at the Ateneo de Manila, returned to Davao City in 1997 to manage the family business.

"My dad in many lawsuits but, [everytime] I would ask my wife to sign a check, she would complain about the expense. She told me, 'why don't you take up law,' said Gomez, who studied for Gatbuy Pilipino for 13 years.

Gomez said she did not expect to pass.

"I really worked hard. I studied a lot, but after I took the bar I was a bit afraid because I felt that I did not do well in certain subjects," she said, adding that in the last exams, she was overcome by sleepiness.

On Friday, the day the results were released, Gomez went swimming to ease her tensions.

Then she received a text message from Hildegarde Hipe, the dean of the Ateneo de Davao Law school, telling her that she not only passed, she landed in 8th place.

She remembered that Hipe had told her to call her grandmother to enlist law school, recalling that an aunt of hers had stopped for only two weeks.

Diligent

But she persisted and asked to be given a chance.

"I was really diligent. When I woke up in the morning, the first thing I did was study," she said.

Her teacher in constitutional law, Vinnets Paul Bismaya, said he knew Gomez, whom he described as "good and studious," would land in the Top 10.

Hipe said he also knew Gomez would top the exams as she was "very diligent."

But she was now lawyer has no plans of working in Manila.

"I really don't care about the pay, even if they pay me a fortune but if I have to live there, no thank you. I love it here, I don't like that place," she said.

Saver the moment

Aneri said a colleague from the law firm also called him and told him to "savor the moment."

He plans to celebrate with friends after Holy Week, though he isn't imagine how he can accommodate all of them.

Aneri said he would continue working in the Villaroel and Sangcopan, adding he has also "The Firm for being the personal lawyers of President Macapagal-Arroyo. He said the negative publicity was undeserved.

Aneri said he wants to eventually head his own law firm.

"I'm not a fan of the short term, I'll stay with [the firm] unless they name me out ... I don't think so," he said, laughing.

Ping's Senate bet woos 'ghost' voters in Bicol

From page A6

didate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, was campaigning in the center of town when he saw a group of people near the entrance of an establishment. He walked over, introduced himself, and started shaking hands with everybody.

He caught sight of coffee and ordered for him that he was in the lobby of a five-storey police. The unflappable Panfilo just smiled and walked back to the street.

"He probably thought the hotel's janitor was a shopping mall. When he saw the coffee, he stopped cold," Lacson said of the incident, which was also witnessed by reporters covering the campaign.

"It shows he's very diligent in campaigning," Lacson told supporters and organizers of his campaign sortie in Albay during a dinner in his honor Friday evening.

In a previous sortie in Quezon province, Lacson said Panfilo contributed to sports using a public address system mounted on the back of a pick-up truck, despite the absence of people on a long stretch of highway between town centers.

"The houses on the highway were few and far between," Lacson said.

"When [one motorcade] passed by a cemetery, Congressman Panfilo stopped addressing the dead. 'You who are dead [and buried], please don't vote by the coming elections. Excise Panfilo might be defeated," Lacson narrated and the audience laughed.

Self-deprecating humor

Panfilo was refusing to let time lose control election cheating strategy of ghost voting wherein a few persons cast a deadperson's identity to vote.

The use of self-deprecating humor helps Panfilo assuage such voters. One joke he likes to tell, which it always a hit with crowds, goes like this: "When the campaign started, people told me I looked like my nephew, so then our tiyahin Panfilo. After a month campaigning under the sun, people tell me I look like [the late comedian] Dencio Padilla."

Robin is fair-complexioned while Dencio, who ironically enough often played FPJ's sidekick in the movies, was darker.

Still, Panfilo promises a "no-nonsense" job if elected to the Senate.

Seriously now, Panfilo said: "When I was in the Lower House, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. ordered to me as the equivalent of 50 congressmen in floor debates. Now, I believe I can be the equivalent of 12 senators' [sic]."

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gomez

FBI warns of terror strikes in key US cities

WASHINGTON — Trains and buses in major US cities may be targeted this summer by terrorists using bombs hidden in bags or luggage, federal counterterrorism officials told law enforcement and transportation officials in a nationwide bulletin.

FBI and Homeland Security Department officials said they had received unsubstantiated intelligence reports about a plot by terrorists to target commercial transportation systems. The bulletin, issued late Thursday, mentioned no specific cities or dates and did not elaborate on the source of the information.

A senior federal law enforcement official, speaking Friday on condition of anonymity, said the intelligence, compiled with the deadly March 11 commuter train attacks in Madrid in which bombs were all inside backpacks, has increased the level of worries about a similar attack in the United States.

A spokesperson for the US passenger rail system, Amtrak, said the company stepped up security after the Madrid bombings, including use of bomb-sniffing dogs, although the company's trains have received no specific or credible threats.

"It should not be considered unusual that the FBI should issue this kind of a bulletin in the midst of what occurred in Madrid last month," Amtrak said in a statement.

Homeland Security spokesperson Brian Roehrkasse said information in the bulletin was being shared via the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System to ensure proper security measures are implemented around the country.

Officials said the message was sent mainly out of an abundance of caution, and the threat—deemed "somewhat credible" by one official—was not causing color-alerts throughout the government.

The nation's terror alert level remains at yellow, or elevated, the midpoint of the five-color scale. It was last raised to orange, or high, on Dec. 21 amid suspicions about terror attacks using commercial aircraft. The level returned to yellow on Jan. 16.

Passengers could see changes because of the bulletin. Federal officials are encouraging local transit authorities to conduct random passenger inspections and security sweeps of stations and to increase public announcements encouraging people to report unattended baggage or suspicious behavior.

It would be fair to say public transit systems are at "code yellow plus," said Greg Hull, director of operations, safety and security for the American Public Transportation Association.

Jarin Brown, spokesperson for Greyhound Lines Inc., said at its Dallas headquarters that the bus company tells employees to be extra vigilant when such alerts are not issued. She said, however, that the cost of passenger inspection methods used by airports are impractical at the company's 2,000 locations, with 10,000 departures daily.

Intelligence indicates a plot might involve bombs made of ammonium nitrate fertilizer and diesel fuel, similar to the explosive concealed in a rental truck that blew up on Oklahoma City federal building in 1995. Both items are readily available around the United States.

Those improvised bombs would then be concealed in luggage and carry-on bags, such as backpacks or duffel bags, and detonated either aboard buses or trains or in transportation stations, according to the government warning. A viable explosive could be concealed in luggage, it says. AP

US tightens visa rules on 27 nations

WASHINGTON—Citizens from 27 of America's closest allies, including Britain, Japan and Australia, will now be fingerprinted and photographed on arrival in the United States as part of a security crackdown, authorities announced on Friday.

The policy to begin as airports and seaports by Sept. 30 and at land borders by 2004 and ending by the end of the year, extends a program that started Jan. 5 under which everyone who comes to the United States on a visa—except diplomats—is fingerprinted and photographed on arrival.

US officials said the move was needed to prevent attacks like those of Sept. 11, 2001 and reflected the opportunity that the 27 "Visa Waiver" nations will have no fear of deadlines begin issuing passports with biometric data like fingerprints.

The Bush administration said it had asked the US Congress for a one-year extension to the deadline and said that its decision to fingerprint and photograph even the visitors who do not need visas was designed to close a loophole.

"We believe that an extension — will send potential disruption economic and travel and at the same time requiring the fingerprints and photographs will help mitigate the security concerns related to extending the deadline," US State Department spokesperson Adam Ereli told reporters. Reuters

US sets sanctions on Iran suppliers

WASHINGTON—The United States imposed sanctions on 13 companies and individuals from seven countries for supplying Iran with equipment and expertise cited in making nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The State Department said the penalties, imposed under the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000, apply to five Chinese, five Macedonian and two Iranian companies as well as one firm each from Belarus, North Korea, Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates.

The sanctions were imposed because of "credible information" that the firms had transferred to Iran since 1999 equipment and technology that "have the potential of making a material contribution to WMD, or cruise or ballistic missile systems," deputy spokesperson Adam Ereli said. AFP

Spain finds bomb on high-speed rail, calls in army

MADRID—Spain went to the army in guard its railways on Friday after finding a bomb under a high-speed track that contained explosives similar to those used in last month's Madrid train bombings.

Travel was disrupted as millions of Spaniards tried to get out for Holy Week Easter holidays. It reopened emotional wounds still raw from the suspected Islamist al Qaida bombings of March 11 that killed 191 people three days before a general election.

With the threat averted of a new carnage at the high point of Spain's Christian calendar, Interior Minister Angel Acebes said police would painstakingly check the 3541 km/2 Madrid-Seville line on which the bomb was found and then use helicopters and extra vehicles to guard the line.

"It makes operations to reinforce security has been put in place, involving the armed forces, police, Civil Guard and security guards of (state railway firm) Renfe," Acebes said.

The 12 kg of dynamite, packed in a bag, was found in open country near the town of Moreles, 40 km to the central city of Toledo. It was defused safely. Investigators believe the bomb was planted on Holy Saturday and intended to derail a speeding train.

The possibility that the explosives, though not detonated, may be of the same type used to blow up four commuter trains last month caused fears that the al Qaida-linked group believed to be behind the Madrid attacks could still be operational.

"The speculative say it could be the same as was used on March 11," Acebes said. He made no comment on who set the bomb.

Spain is holding 15 people, many of them Moroccans, over the Madrid attacks, which one Islamist group said were reprisals for Madrid's backing for the US invasion of Iraq. The Socialist party, upset voters at the election held in the wake of the bombings, plans to bring its 1,300 troops home from Iraq.

An attack on one of Europe's new generation, high-speed trains travelling at full tilt could have had disastrous consequences. More than 100 people died in 1998 when a German ICE train similar to Spain's AVE express jumped the rails.

France foiled an attempt by suspected Algerian Islamists in 1995 to bomb its flagship Paris-Lyon TGV high-speed rail line.

Saudi water have damaged French trains, including the prestige Channel Tunnel line to London, since the Madrid train attacks.

Thousands of kilometers of track across country pose a major headache for security forces trying to protect them.

High-speed trains on the Seville line were halted after the discovery, leaving thousands of travellers stranded and angry at the start of one of the busiest travel periods of the year.

Millions of Spaniards will flood out of cities in the next few days for holidays leading up to the celebration of Roman Catholic Easter next Sunday, April 11. Reuters

Bin Laden inspired Bali bombings–JI members

KUALA LUMPUR—Admitting they were part of no Islamic terror group, four jailed Malaysians said Friday that a string of attacks against churches and other targets in Southeast Asia—including bombings in Bali that killed 202 people—were inspired by Osama bin Laden.

The claims, made in televised interviews, supported assertions that the Jemaah Islamiyah group to their men al Qaida, that connection by the suspects were denied by the accused leader of Jemaah Islamiyah and drew the fears human rights groups that warned the confessions may have been coerced.

Jemaah Islamiyah is thought to have been behind Christmas Eve church bombings in nine Indonesian cities in 2000 that killed 19 people, the nightclub blasts on the resort island of Bali and an August 2003 car bomb at a Jakarta hotel that killed 12 people.

Mohamed Nasir Abbas, one of the four men interviewed by Malaysia's TV3, said the bombings were inspired by religious reform, known as Salafism, preached by bin Laden.

"People who believed in the Salafism carried out bombings," Nasir said. "Therefore they considered churches. The bombing in Bali was based on a policy to take revenge against America."

According to the offer, Muslims were told to kill "Americans wherever they are, irrespective of whether they are armed or not, whether they are soldiers or civilians or tourists, of dirty people or children," Nasir said.

Another detainee, Imron Mustofa, identified himself as a 27 land miner and said he had transported explosives to Poso that, the site of one of the church bombings.

Nasir and the other three were interviewed and they received military training in Afghanistan. They now renounce Jemaah Islamiyah, they said, because it killed Muslims and other innocent people. AP

Americans vow revenge for killings

WASHINGTON—Top US officials pledged revenge Friday for the grisly killings of US civilians in the restive Iraqi city of Fallujah, as the deaths of two soldiers brought the US death toll to 600.

In a statement, the US military said one soldier from the 3d Armored Cavalry had been killed and another wounded in a roadside bomb attack in the Al-Mizan district of Baghdad early Friday.

A US Marine died Thursday in "a result of enemy action" in the Al-Anbar province west of Baghdad, the statement added.

Three deaths brought the US toll to 600, 600 deaths from hostile fire and 1702 non-combat deaths.

Top US officials warned publicly to make perpetrators pay for killing four civilians as US media replayed images of two blackened bodies being mutilated and hung from a bridge in Fallujah. AFP

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MABEL HOMES

PARTICIPANTS of the male age group race in the shore during the Asian Triathlon Championship at Subic yesterday. Japanese bets dominated the competition, sweeping the Elite Under-23 men's and women's events.

Japanese bets rule Asian triathlon tilt

By Tina Dacks

SUBIC — Powerhouse Japan lived up to expectations and swept the top three slots in both the Elite Under-23 men's and women's events yesterday in the Speedo 2004 Asian Triathlon Championships at the Subic Bay Freeport.

Yuichi Hosoda clocked 1:54:57 to triumph in the men's Under-23 in the expense of compatriots Kenji Imamura and Eita Higashino, who settled for second and third place with 2:00:13 and 2:02:07, respectively.

On the distaff side, 22-year-old Eri Nakagawa scored a come-from-behind victory in the Under-23 championship with a time of 2:11:36, edging fellow Japanese Ai Ueda (2:12:05) and Reiko Tanaka (2:19:16) to second and third in the event organized by the Triathlon Association of the Philippines and hosted by the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

A first timer in the Under-23 category, Hosoda set the pace throughout the 1.5K swim-40K bike-10K run. The 19-year-old Tokushima native is ranked 11th in Japan's national rankings.

"It was a good race. I was first. I could win, since there was no pressure because the others were a long way behind me," said Hosoda.

Nakagawa was only third out of the water, but outstripped erstwhile pacesetter Cami Qian of China and fellow Japanese Satomi Hosoda during the first loop of the biking and kept the lead all the way.

Meanwhile, national champion Sandra Arsenio looked stomach cramps during the second loop of the 10K to cross fourth seventh place in the women's Under-23 with a 2:25:56-clocking, surpassing the Philippine record of 2:30 held by veteran Cynthia Rose Lopez.

The Philippines placed third in the women's event with Alexandra Gaerlan and Anna Maria Ignacio combining with double's best finish on an 8:53.20 time behind Japan and Singapore.

The lucrative's team, with John Mark Vianney Arcadio up at 11th place with 2:14:25" in the Under-23. Narayanan, Sean Lito and Francis Oliveros combined for a 7:04.44 finish behind Japan, Hong Kong, Uzbekistan and Singapore.

In the Asian Age Group Competition, Shannon de Carvalho and Karen Lui of Hong Kong clinched the men's and women's championships.

INT'L JUNIOR TENNIS

Briton, Indian forge final duel

A BRITON and an Indian will clash for the boys' crown of the 15th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championships.

Ninth seed Tom Rushby of Great Britain defeated second-seeded Australian Jordan Lee, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, to reach the finals.

Rushby will meet Yuki Bhambri of India, who upended Australian Nick Lindahl, 6-4, 6-4, in the other semifinal match.

Rushby, ranked No. 3 in the juniors' back home, expects a tough final match against Bhambri, who won the singles and doubles titles in a Group 2 tourney in New Delhi two months ago.

"Beating the top seed has given me more confidence. But every player has his own game so I have to be prepared," said Rushby, who will try to become the second Britton to enter this Group 1 event after Martin Lee in 1995.

Bhambri, who lost in the first round of this year's Australian Open Juniors, hopes to follow the footsteps of compatriot Mahesh Bhupati, who won this title in 1991.

"I'll try my best to win the title. I know that Rushby is a very good player, he won in Malaysia and he will be a tough opponent in the final," said Bhambri, 17, who hails from Chandigarh.

In the girls singles division, top seed Chan Hung-lan and second seed Hsu Wei-Chieh secured outstanding wins to forge an all-Taiwanese final in this event sponsored by Asics Sports and Wilson balls.

The world juniors No. 7 Chan outclassed No. 14 Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark, 6-0, 6-3, while Hsu prevailed over No. 11 Sejal Shinde of India, 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

RUSHBY returns a volley to Ward during their semifinal match in the Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tournament yesterday. Rushby won, 6-1, 4-2.

Hapee, Sunkist share PBL lead

HAPEE Toothpaste and Sunkist-UST chomped separate foes yesterday to forge a four-way tie for the lead in the Philippine Basketball League Unity Cup at the Rizal Memorial.

The defending champion Tooth Sparklers regained fire-and-game rally of Lyn Pipes-Sarmex, 79-71, while the Tigers subdued the Scouts, 70-66.

Hapee and Sunkist now tote 2-0 slates from 1 each, same as idle Bicol Power Boats and Visa Mineral Water Rainbow 12.

Vito defeated Shelter Investment, 80-78, while Welcoat clobbered newcomer Toyota Otis-Letran, 76-69, on Thursday.

Aarons and Bhumika have yet to playoff the winner's column after two outings.

Hapee sure a 10-point spread which tied down to just nine in the last two minutes as former teammates and now Lee Hipo guard Lonny Alfred Ivisevic carried three of his five saints down.

Though time was not on shooter's side, it was enough to double the heroics of Coach Jamel Barrios, who unleashed his demolition squad of Francis Bellosillo, Eugene Tan, Jeff Dapa, Oliver Gonging and Mark Macapagal to stave off the rally.

Bhumika, a 6-foot-5 center, contributed 13 points and four rebounds while rookie Boyd Peter Jamilla added 12 markers, three rebounds, six assist and a steal for Hapee.

Tenorio shone for Sunkist with 20 points, six rebounds, nine assists and four steals.

Jamel Vizcarra showed the way for Sunkist-UST as he scored 18 points and added two rebounds and one assist.

Hapee
HAPEE 79: Mercado 0-1, Jamilla 12, Alfonso 3-7, Alvarez 11, Bonifacio 7, Dapa 2, Ortiz 3, Santos 4, Tan 3, Ty 2, Cardoso 0, Gonging 0

LYN-PIPES 71: Ivisevic 9, Cruz 10, Ramos 0, Santiago 10, Fonacier 3, De Vegara 4, Nicanor 3, Arenas 0, Gerona 4, Abordonado 0, Zuno 0, Estacio 0

Scores: 15-18, 28-30, 51-42, 79-71

Sunkist
SUNKIST 70: Vizcarra 18, Tenorio 20, Aquino 10, Francisco 4, Lucas 6, Dionisio, Tejada, Mendoza, Quiazon 2

BELL-KO 66: Dela Cruz 20, Dalisay 12, Pinlac 10, Ego 11, Serrano 4, Alvarez 3, Mercado 2, Mercado 2, Jamilla 0

Scores: 20-12, 34-33, 57-54, 70-66

Paragua still No. 1

INTERNATIONAL Master Mark Paragua is still the Philippines' top chess player.

Paragua, the most formidable Filipino athlete in the historic Southeast Asian Games, was given an Elo rating of 2529 by the International Chess Federation, keeping his lead over GM Joey Antonio (2525) and Eugene Torre (2512).

Arizona-based IM Rogelio "Barlo" Barcenilla and Olympic bound Pide Master Joseph Gambito improved on their ratings (rounded figs):

Barcenilla increased his rating from 2518 to 2537 with six games played while Gambito (Australia) raised his rating from 2450 to 2483. MM Marlon Ibe (unofficial) Contributor

Sta. Lucia . . .

half smack home. That Fedila was a lesson for them," said Chua.

But despite handing the Turbochargers their sixth setback in nine games, the Realtors still bagged the cellar by virtue of the idle Express' 2-5 slate.

"I hope the injuries on my key players would heal after the Holy Week break. I have three back out and they needed rest badly," said Chua.

Aside from Espino's sore upper back, Kenneth Duremdes is still recuperating from a calf injury and Paolo Mendoza sustained his left ankle.

Scores:

STA. LUCIA 100—Rivera 22, Espino 16, Aquino 10, Francisco 4, Lazo 6, Dionisio 7, Mendoza, Quiazon 2.

BREL-KO—Dela Cruz 20, Dalisay 12, Pinlac 10, Ego 11, Serrano 4, Alvarez 3, Mercado 2, Mercado 2, Jamilla 0

Quarters: 20-12, 34-33, 57-54, 100-80

Height of barbarity

SPECTATOR

ALX MARAVILLA

IMAGINE yourself getting invited to a gathering. Now, by a telephone call. Next, by a written invitation in formal or the verbal invitation through the phone call.

"I'd like the invitation to be formal," the invitee would normally tell you.

Usually, you insist a happy fit in the mire at the other end of the line. You smile.

"You will receive an invitation in writing," the caller would tell the unwary one.

You feel proud getting invited.

You feel you belong, are important.

You promise yourself to honor the invitation.

But, for one reason or another you won't be able to attend. Either a previous commitment will come in the way, or you are too ill to be able to attend.

Something is further, maybe you do not want to see a guest who, you are that man, is also going to get invited. You do not want to see that guest because either that guest is too loud for you or has a middle initial that starts with the letter O. O as in Oblivion.

If you couldn't make it?

I have many times been flower-spectators of weddings and baptism because of invitations I received very late.

Have I not represented my own parents (when they were still around) to occasions that they could not attend for one reason or another?

Hey Filipino, indeed. As Filipino as the Pandanggo sa Ilaw.

But come now that report a while back that some guys calling themselves members of the so-called "super body" in basketball had driven away two representatives sent by the top brass of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) to attend a meeting called for by said members of the "super body."

This, after the BAP had received a written invitation to attend said meeting.

Now a group supposedly composed of people steeped in sportsmanship could do such dastardly act if beyond me.

One report in a newspaper even said the two emissaries were shooed away were before "they could finish eating their meriendo cena." (Verse, that'll be the height of barbarity.

No wonder that all along, the BAP has not been taking the bare behind the so-called "super body" seriously. What it tried to, it got the boot.

And all along these members of the so-called "super body" had been barking about unification in Philippine basketball? You call barking out representatives of your so-called parent cattle mine?

Classic, give us a break.

***

BIRTHDAY. Happy birthday to Chairman Eric Buhain of the Philippine Sports Commission, who is celebrating today by playing host to my fellow sportswriters in a golf tournament in Calamba. Thank you for inviting me, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to play like my true nephews, Tanya and Lucy, are also celebrating today. (Ayaw nadito! say two to the kids and I'm sure you will understand. Many kids do adore me and one way of returning the favor to them is to try desperately to grace occasions of special meaning to them, like a birthday bash. Let me also take the opportunity to greet CBA an adorer happy birthday. Aw Cha will text a new text tomorrow. Happy birthday, Madame President!

Feliciano 'shocked,' airs side on NGAP elections

PRESIDENT Rod V. Feliciano of the National Golf Associations of the Philippines said yesterday he was "shocked beyond belief" over "vague statements" made by Tourney Manotoc regarding the NGAP elections set for April 26.

In a statement Feliciano said: "Sly (Manotoc) announces that the NGAP elections are flawed in serious and I'll not take that sitting down. I don't know what he meant by 'flawed' but definitely he is off key. How we are preparing for the NGAP elections and how come Manotoc suddenly saying the NGAP polls are flawed when there is no election to speak of yet in the first place. I am shocked beyond belief after reading in the papers the vague statements attributed to Manotoc when per se he had light my louder chip in the NGAP."

Several major newspapers last Saturday carry on Friday about Quezon's Manotoc having withdrawn his candidacy in the NGAP elections "because the NGAP polls are flawed."

It was also reported that Luis Yulo of Caloocan had withdrawn his nomination together with Bayale Tagaytay's Vicente Enrico Santos, as incumbent NGAP director Andy Tomilas also told the Inquirer in the same story that he withdrew his nomination for director.

"Except for Mr Tomilas, the rest, director were in order since Fortuno, Luigi and Emong are members of a club in good standing with the NGAP," said Feliciano. "In Mr. Tomilas case, he doesn't have to withdraw as all because he was not qualified to run in the first place, because Eagle Ridge is not an NGAP member."

Refuting Manotoc's "statement" that he and Manotoc were both "holding constituency talks," Feliciano clarified that Manotoc had requested for a meeting, which "I had recently acceded to knowing Tourney to be a gentleman. After the first meeting, he requested for another and another. All in all, we had three meetings."

FELICIANO: I'll not take that sitting down.

Said Feliciano: "They were not conciliatory meetings at all because I had not considered Tourney and anyone for that matter, as my enemy. I met him because he requested for it."

Feliciano answered Manotoc's "running down" to become NGAP president and said Manotoc wanted Feliciano nobody here.

"Told him I cannot make him president," said Feliciano, "I told him only by a majority vote by the 13-person board of NGAP directors can be become NGAP president."

Feliciano said Manotoc claimed he was misquoted in the newspapers "about his plans to run for president."

Added Feliciano: "I just wish he would not say he was misquoted again after my side of the issues comes out."

Manotoc was quoted on Friday as saying Feliciano turned down his request to "put four directors of Manotoc's cluster to the NGAP board."

"I told him I could not do that because there are basic rules to be followed," said Feliciano. "The election process is basically under the provisions of the Constitution and I was surprised why he had to resort to that. Did he want me to fix the election, rig it or something? I am really surprised. Now that he has withdrawn his candidacy, he tells us the NGAP election is flawed. What kind of logic is that? Just because he had withdrawn, the election process now becomes flawed?"

Feliciano also quoted Manotoc's statements—"My vision of unifying the different golf clubs under the NGAP will no longer be possible."

"What did he mean by that?" said Feliciano. "He has not been with the NGAP all these years and suddenly he has this vision of unification? He has done nothing for the NGAP except to vilify it the last few years —maybe more. I know that. People had been telling me that. Still, I welcomed and met up with him. Then he says things totally contrary to what we had talked about. And now here he is proclaiming himself a visionary."

In closing, Feliciano also chided Manotoc "for his biased stand against military courses."

Said Feliciano: "What's wrong with our military courses voting for just men in the NGAP board? Then, they are bona fide members of the NGAP. Second, the BOD does not discriminate between a soldier and a civilian playing golf. We are all Filipinos here. We live in a democracy. I wonder why Tourney has been acting and thinking that way.

Rookies bolster Tour cast

EIGHTEEN rookies are joining the 10-caddie roster of the 2004 Tour Philippines which kicks off April 11 to May 2.

"The Tour has an objective of drawing the potential and the talented from the countryside and, with these rookies in 2004, we are getting there," said Tour Philippines chair Bert Lina, also the president of the national sports association for cycling.

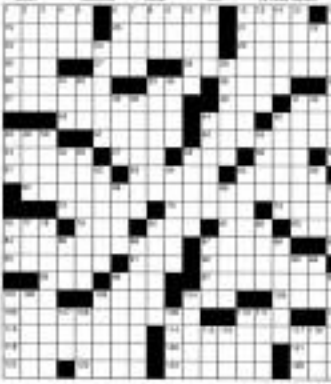
Tour organizer Lito Alvarez has emphasized on the inclusion of a Rookie of the Year trophy among the regular awards. With the trophy is a whopping P50,000 cash prize.

The rookies on the roster are Julio Pacaog, John Rimbert, Ronnel Fraulin, Robert Pagala, Orlie Villanueva, Michael Xavier Jr., Dante Cogan, Boni Rito, Alvin Simona, Virgilio Quintin Jr., Emma Marohnal, August Benedicto, Bebit Ferrer, Ismael Ancheta and Jeffrey Cabrera.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Boardo J. Stowe

1 TO 1



answer on page P3

INQUIRER

OPINION

EDITORIALS

Palm-off

NO DST in the Roman Catholic calendar is as double-edged as Palm Sunday. On the one hand, it is a day of welcome; on the other, it is also a day of treachery and betrayal. As the multitudes met Christ waving palms and crying hosannas, sinister forces plotted behind him. Everything would turn out. It is not a case of someone overstaying his welcome, but of someone who

> "eats the substance of the hospitality accorded him. Also, the warm reception he got was just a prelude to the sorrow he would suffer at the hands of his enemies.

It is wrong to say, however, that the hospitality he got was spurious. Every one loves a superstar. We don't know if Christ had handlers in charge up his entry to Jerusalem, but the advance publicity he generated through his insightful teachings and fantastic miracles was enough to arouse any liberals style of the F4. Everyone who met him was a believer; a fan.

Palm Sunday is a cautionary tale on the rabid welcome accorded the candidates in the May election. Some of them are running on the peddling of their slogan who either seek to enrich themselves or want them to fall flat on their faces—either way their intention is to have a various good time at the candidates' expense. These candidates shake the hands of the people whose eager smiles may disguise the fact that they're giving him a disbelievers. Come election time, these candidates wouldn't know what hit them. They would be nailed on the cross of their self-delusion.

Not that these candidates are messiahs. It may be that they are the ones who are giving the electorate a disbelievers. Their political rhetoric largely consists of singing hosannas to the people. They promise to serve in the service of the people. Little do the people know that they are being taken for a ride. They have been pitched on the donkey's back by the meddlesome words of politicians. By telling lie glib candidates, they make asses of themselves.

Our unsavory politics has committed a surfeit of sins. Instead of welcoming the Christ into our crooked hearts for repentance and atonement, we do so for a con job. The election season may yet palm off Palm Sunday.

Palm-Sunday Pinoys

ANOTHER danger signal of our Palm-Sunday politics is its celebratory element that either betrays the frivolity of our democracy or hides our inexplicable to confront fully the challenges of moral and social reformation that is the only ingredient to true nation-building.

We have had a lot of Palm Sundays as a people. Edsa I and II were religious and political pageants unique in the annals of the history of revolutions. Champagne corks were popped rather than guns fired in either Edsa. Confetti, rather than bullets, rained on the party-going revolutionaries. They who defied and toppled the government are still occupied unscathed; they got drunk and smashed.

But the same people who welcomed the restoration of democracy and the return of good government were the same people who betrayed the cause. The treachery might not have come instbeardy, like a Marlboo who sadistically harness a prey only to shoot him down when he's stuffed and swollen. Our treachery came through a steady stream of little lies, lame excuses and spineless acts. Averse to confrontation of any sort, we evaded the fact that while we might have pulled down a corrupt despot, we had replaced him with smaller versions of the same little crooked ves.

Perhaps because of our addiction to parties, we might have forgotten that nation-building entails sacrifices. Making democracy and government work means that we have to stick to an ethic that is just vision and just work, hard work. And that ethic does not allow for short cuts and deferrals of sacrifice.

Ah, but it is said we are a people who have sacrificed much; in fact, some say we are a nation of masochists. But despite the performativity of our fervent Catholic rituals, which conjure Christ's suffering for our psychological gratification, we seem to have missed out on the meaning of the Passion: that it is a means toward an end, that suffering is but a key to liberation, as the unchristian and saints knows well. Our failure to build on the gains of our revolutions and make this nation work is because we refuse to sacrifice and do honest work. We are better at throwing parties than running government.

Intellectual snobbery?

SEPARATE OPINION

BENJAMIN L. CRUZ

PHILIPPINES are always front a speech I delivered the other Thursday, March 25, before the Rotary Club of Manila, where I discussed the qualifications for election to public office. We had a lively open forum afterwards and I remember enjoyed the exchange of wit usually one or two jokes.

"And then there is the question of competence. This has been harshly discussed as an undemocratic criterion for public office.

"By and large, the persons who have served as Presidents of the Philippines have received subsequent education, some even post-graduate studies in reputable universities abroad. The supposed disadvantage in the present campaign, however, cannot entail a similar undergarments.

"It was bad enough that Erap mangled the English language although he was elevated to college when he stopped formal studies; it is worse that Fernando Poe Jr. dropped out in Grade 10 when he was only a high school sophomore and can hardly speak any widely used language except simple grammatical lapses.

"Glad why not, for God's sake, when my 6-year-old granddaughter, Cara, can even name parents in English? And my grandson Bala, who is only 8 years old, sometimes (illumine expressions.)

"She's apologetic distinct his language deficiency and say that, after all, leaders in other governments, as in China and Japan, do not speak English either. Thus, but it is not provided in their constitutions, as it is in ours, that for purposes of communication and promotion, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English. (Art. XII, Sec. 7)

"English is widely understood throughout the country and is more often used than Filipino in official publications. Most of our statutes and local ordinances, executive proclamations and orders, and judicial decisions are in English. The President's State of the Nation Address is in English. Even the vote-

ing in Filipino may not are, oddly enough, also in English, as Sassi's Dr Eng at Philippine Movies (sic)?

"It is an inexplicable curiosity in our Constitution that all appointive government personnel except those performing manual work are required to possess a modicum of educational eligibility to qualify for public employment. Even ordinary clerks must possess elementary competence in English to maintain proof of their competence.

"The argument even the Chief Justice must be a lawyer rather passing the bar examinations in English, with at least 15 years experience as a judge or as a prominent professional qualification is required of the Senate President or the Speaker of the House of Representatives. They could be glad to be governors as long as they have the support of their able-ll become colleagues.

"The President if the Philippines may never have been inside a classroom and cannot even write his own speeches could never run, but he may qualify as Undersecretary in the highest official to be governments.

"Supposing educational entitlements for elective office may seem like intellectual snobbery but it is a prudent requirement for the proper functioning of responsible official duties. We are reasonably require that the functions of the presidency can be better discharged by its educated persons than by one who is academically deficient.

"The reasons-minded view has been advanced this many of our be-lettered leaders have disproved the premise of their credentials, as it is naive to say someone who may be limited in learning but master of his destiny to serve the people.

"Secondary school is an guarantee of dedicated servant. It must be backed with the ability to marry into either one's vision of a better government or the people. It cannot be just and the one whose intelligence is deemphasizeable as one is limited to the pupil's basic. I fit, and possibly does not include reading the Web Mo Dangan.

"When one is affluent with a serious, keen interest, he does not go to an orthodoxy for solace. He chooses a competent cardiologist. He requires a mature investment lawyer. But the person is an older female than either the counselor or social doctor.

"I detail the thought that by June 30 this year, we shall be living under a government headed by President Fernando Poe Jr. with Loren Legarda or Noli de Castro as vice president. Why? Since an economic necessary if not God-fearing, unswerving of foreign affairs, and a future further championed by such Filipinos known as Wing Ruiz Ha, Leo Lapid and Ronger. Earnest. In Pantaleon City where I live, the mayor is not the one who is the outraged only of four thing and, who may be the most congratulate of our disciples. Those decisions are all from the hand of under believe.

"Our history is being subjected by histrionics. Presumptuous candidates are sidling on the sensibilities substance of their fitness on relevant them to elective positions, where they cannot function without direction's ears to reach them how to act or when heads to tell them when to say.

"This is not mere pretenses but an actual issue in our Republic. If this happens—and it will if we take an automatic pretext as—we will have only ourselves to blame for our failure, as responsible citizens, to renew our misguided commitment from the illusions of the elites' world."

Holy Week Triple R

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

I Will wring to look for something funny to start this column for Holy Week. But, try as I might, I could see that any. *Why?* Because there's nothing funny about a man who was condemned, tortured and killed in the way people like Jesus had when he came to save.

Holy Week is a time when we have to call a spade a spade. No matter how we look at it, the passion and death of the Christ was an ugly, painful, violent death. It was the "human story" ever told." The Holy Week should lead us to look at ourselves and the ugliness of our sins. All too often, we tend to make excuses and comfort ourselves with the thought that it's all right and proceed to rationalize and even spiritualize our misbehaviors and go on sinning. Maybe it is because we have never really known, we have never really harbored the brutal sufferings Christ underwent for us sinners.

* * *

"Relax, see a movie." Watch Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ." That's right. It's Holy Week, but go and see a movie. It is a movie that will leave you. We have to do as Bishop Gaudencio Rosales has written a powerful letter urging us to watch this movie. "It is a powerful moving re-telling of what took place in the last 12 hours of Jesus' life up to his death on the cross on Calvary." He puts forth two reasons. There being younger children cannot fully understand the violence and the violence ought to see graphic for them, don't blame all the Jewish people for Christ's suffering and death. We also are a part of his suffering because of our sins.

* * *

Archbishop Rosales ends his pastoral letter with the hope that it will help us experience and encounter Christ, and lead us to renewal. He even calls it a "Lenten good deed" to bring people to see the movie. So,

Read time to see this Triple R movie especially this Holy Week, a movie that will make you relax, reflect and renew.

* * *

Most days seeing a movie this Holy Week, takes me to look at the movie of your life itself. It is a beautiful time for you and for me to take a good hard look at who we are, what we have done and what we are doing the rest of our lives. In practice and in theory. It is often hard to tell at times "Yeah, fortunately no!"

* * *

This is Holy Week, find more also to take a good hard look at the world and the suffering of people around us. More than the suffering of Jesus. Let us open our eyes again at the real life sufferings of Jesus in the people. Whose was the face that you took away your from your own concerns, woes and miseries, and laid your eyes on people who are less fortunate than you are? The Holy Week is an excellent time to be confidently, open and "devastated." It is precisely the time to be open and to be ardently responsive to the cravings of the divine to our hearts and to what is happening around us.

* * *

Aside from the Holy Week Triple R (Relax, Reflect, Renew), complete your Holy Week with another Triple R by sharing your love, resources and bounties. In particular, Caritas, the social mission arm of the Archdiocese of Manila, is asking us again to share our time, our talents and our resources to "the least, the last and the lost." Our love for God must overflow in our love for our neighbors in concrete deeds of love. Palm Sunday is Caritas Sunday. Lets generously and help fund the church programs for the poor. Archbishop Rosales urges us "to give to another inside up our mind (see subscription or another's compassion of the God loves a cheerful giver." (2Cor 9:7) Happy suffering, baby smiles, home's realities, pampering laugh.) the pastoral letter, please get in touch with Caritas Chief, DSS at 26, 563-9111, Ha No., 563-9099, e-mail: caritas@magsaysay.net

* * *

Let us not forget that charity begins at home. Let us use this opportune time to reach out to our loved ones and "mend our fences", as we say. Let us find time to say "Thank you, I'm sorry, I love you" even again to our loved ones. Especially, let us reach out to those who need healing, forgiveness and conversion. In particular, let us open our hearts again to those who are not easy to love. Yes, read love is never easy. That's precisely what Jesus did. He loved us, not the easy way.

* * *

Let the Holy Week be one to use the Triple R for our country. As we prepare for the election, let us be unbending in our resolve to remove bad leaders to reduce any evasion from poverty and to redirect our human resources from poverty and misery.

Wishing you all a truly meaningful, blessed, and holy week.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, especially this Holy Week help me to relax, reflect and renew. Help me to share my time, resources and talents to others, me, and in the coming election, help us to renew our leaders, redirect our misery from poverty and redirect our human resources from poverty and misery.

Where it all started

REVEILLE

Raimundo J. Farolan

ABUNDANCE the name of nations on the occasion of the centennial of their birth in 1963, President Theodore Roosevelt characterized the US military Academy in the following words:

"Of all the institutions in this country, none is more absolutely democratic, more, in the proper sense of the word, more absolutely democratic than this. Here we care nothing for the boy's birthplace, nor his creed, nor his social standing, save we care nothing save for his worth as he is able to show it.

"Here you represent, with almost uniform environment, all countries, all the country geographically. You are drawn from every walk of life to a method of education which is absolutely without favoritism, the sons of men from many states, that kind should be glad to training save the boys' aptitude for the performance of duty. Here you come together as representatives of America in a higher and more special sense than you can possibly be after of any other institution in the land." (Mandatorily American" by David Lipsky.)

Looking back at my career in the Armed Forces, I have often wondered what brought me to choose the military as a career. Graduation from OF Eight in Cellman raised to Fundamental questions based by many managers. What do I do with the rest of my life? I was latest fourth of a soldier's family. My father was a career officer in the army. In fact, was one of my favorites. Like many young men with no clear dimension for the future, the academy represented an adventure into the relative unknown and with other classmates taking the Philippine Military Academy entrance exam, Chris drove was marching in late. As the successful candidates gathered at Camp Aliwa in Baguio City and boarded a bus for Luzon, there was a lot of excitement, many laughter. But as we approached the gates of Fort del Pilar, a silence seemed to engulf the group as we began to notice the sentinels and the men in them when just about. Suddenly it dawned on everyone that our carefree lives were about to change completely.

In many ways, Professor Roosevelt's words ring have been true both for the Hall. The Academy doesn't care whether you are an ilocano, a Tagalog, or a Visayan, it doesn't matter if you are Catholic, Protestant, Muslim or an atheist. Both, middle-class or poor, you partake of the same meals, wear the same uniforms, share the same accommodations, endure the same pain and affirmations. There are no officers or influential godparent to make the least subtle or the least cruel. In "you won't make first captain or star man just because you are related to so-and-so and if you break the rules, you are punished with demerits which will ultimately affect your class standing or your chances to graduate. In the academy a student has considerable control over the minimal distinction of being the class "goat" on the basis of his own merits and performance. Come to think of it, that is how we train our future leaders.

Each cadet receives a monthly salary of P10,800, a pay scale in between that of a platoon sergeant and a second lieutenant, possibly the highest paid scholarship for the payroll of the Philippine Congress. This is in addition to free lodging, free meals, free uniforms, free medical, dental and veterinary, free light, water and transportation. Books and other academic needs come as part of the package. All in all, over 10 million is spent on a cadet graduate. In return, you give up most if not all of the freedoms and liberties enjoyed by civilians. You don't question any orders you learn to obey. You wake up to on the dashing to the bugle call of reveille and climb into bed. 24 hours later

(Continued on page A12)

when the rules call for lights out in the barracks. But to many the person you thought for any given activity and march in formation most of the time.

It is a thoroughly regimented existence and if you think the system, you only make life miserable for yourself.

* * *

Graduation day of the academy are the most publicized among the educational institutions of the land. Not even the elite schools and universities in Metro Manila receive the media attention accorded on the PMA. But behind the glamour and glitz that often characterize the activities at Baty for Pilar, there is a dark side not often mentioned.

It is basic book "PMA Turning the Corner—A look Underneath the Misery" by Major General Ruby de Vera, a former superintendent, he cites our arch-foes without mince having the PMA: bullying or what is commonly referred to as hazing, academic mediocrity and erosion of the honor system. These problems are ugly but authentic, sorely factual. (I for instance is to examine the mission of preventing future leaders for the Armed Forces, they are instead armed with destructive ideas and concepts of purpose.

Let me just make one observation. In it a way, our academy are not difficult. The rigid rules and regulations are not difficult to understand. The rigid and highly structured routine is not difficult to follow. Even the relatively-over-a-year routine is difficult for anyone even with the less industrious, to rigorously adhere the extent in that plague the academy. But the meaningful reference to rules exist, there must be flexibility in the application of rules and regulations. Fortunately the present superintendent, Major General Edilberto Adan, has been adopting measures in the right direction. He will need more time and the continuing support of his organization to complete is work in progress.

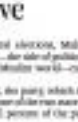
(The columnist graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in April 6, 2004 and ended his military career 20 years later as Philippine Air Force commanding general.)

Rolling back the green wave

IN THE RECENT March 21st general elections, Malaysia demonstrated that the "green wave"—the side of political issue that seems to be engulfing the Muslim world—can be stopped democratically.

In a stunning nationwide reversal, the party, which is led by a fundamentalist religious scholars, lost one of the two state governments it controlled, as well as 31 percent of the parliamentary seats it had secured in the previous 1999 polls.

EYE ON ASIA



Karen Escolar

In the same time, Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi's ruling Barisan Nasional coalition—a multiracial grouping of political parties led by the progressive United Malays National Organization—increased its share of the national vote from 56.48 percent to 63.81 percent.

The surprising victory in Malaysia offers clear lessons for pro-democracy advocates and debate development in other parts of the world.

For Indonesia—the world's largest Muslim nation, which is going to the polls on April 5—the turnaround in Malaysia would well have substantial impact on the moderate majority being enjoyed by the country's secular parties.

Kamarulzaman Askar, the rector of the Islamic University, the country's leading religious seminary, argues: "Many of the country's leading ulma conservative Muslim parties have traditionally been the source for inspiration and for guidance. Their best advice came as a major psychological blow."

Finally, there is a growing realization that the division of mosque and state, a legacy of the Enlightenment, is unsustainable in the Islamic world.

Policymakers must come to terms with the fact that democratization in the Islamic world will not lead to terrorism. Instead, Muslims demand a healthy share of the spoils from the political process and seek to choose leaders on the basis of their popular involvement by engaging in Islamic issues in a manner that must be deeply held religious concerns with contemporary issues national and economic demands.

Second, the Malaysian premier's success demonstrates that political Islam can be defeated when moderate forces are able to step away from debates on Islamic issues once such debates can and will succeed be based on matters of personal faith and creed.

As such aspiring leaders must consider an extensive knowledge of their faith and to understanding history and philosophy. Muslim leaders have to appreciate the socio-economic challenges for a progressive religious ethos...one that is consistent with economic development, democracy and civil society issues on the public and minority rights.

In this respect, Badawi has also encouraged liberally inclined voices to engage in religious discourse, thereby weakening out the monopolies of Middle East-trained clerics who have sought to preserve their monopoly on the interpretation of the Holy Quran.

Third, non-Arabic speaking Muslim societies, such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan, must resist the temptation to "Arabicize" their societies.

In this context, Badawi's administration has deliberately promoted traditional values into and culture—thereby acknowledging the country's heterodox Hindu, Buddhist and specifically Confucian background.

Moreover, Badawi's opposed of calls overlooked Malay-centered and personal values, such as tolerance, gender-mindedness and self-control, struck a triad chord in the country, one-sharing in large part to his electoral victory.

Fourth, Muslim-centered parties and factions. A government's legitimacy will be judged by its ability to conduct free and fair elections, promote law and order and manage civil society issues. As Muslim gain greater personal freedoms, they will seek to exercise these freedoms.

Instances of injustice will undermine the credibility and legitimacy of an administration, as Mahathir Mohamad, Badawi's outspoken predecessor, discovered in 1998 with his treatment of former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Fifth, American policymakers must come to terms with the fact that their proximity to Washington will undermine the credibility of any democratic-elected Muslim leaders.

The endorsement of important Muslim figures—even the sponsorship and support of tacit aggression—i.e., the recent judicial killing of Ahmad Shah Ahmad Hasnie...are all actively unacceptable to the vast majority of Muslims.

Finally, Muslim governments have to distinguish core issues and values from peripheral ones. Badawi's success in defeating Islamic hardliners would. Greater transparency and accountability in corporate life and governance are all-salutary trial. At the same time, it is important to emulate that the modern versions of the community—often in the countryside—are not backward.

To this end, the Malaysian administration has crafted populist policies directed at the much neglected Malay Muslim rural sectors, while also endeavoring to stamp out corruption.

Moreover, governments that advocate a contemporary Islamic vision have to master the economic agenda by being sensible and sustainable. It should be remembered that a great deal of the animus against free-market, liberal democracy arises from the failure of such systems to deliver real economic benefits to the ordinary man.

Wearing my wedding gown

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

GETTING ready for our fifteen Wedding Anniversary celebration, I was told to clear out my closet to make room for my husband's clothes. Because we are the three in our entire table, my sister says it, and we had frequent fears of no concerns. I thought I had moved my wedding outfit to a safe, hard-to-reach area, but we lifted the lid of that beloved box, there was no such box to be found. Instead, tucked in a corner was a plastic bag (not which—heaven—my wedding gown, and my daughter Mica was holding it in her hands. "Mom!" my daughter shouted, "you couldn't use your gown into a plastic bag!!" What can I say? Maybe I was too busy with our honeymoon!

My daughter, Mica, loved my gown, even if it took us a full day to clean the dust with cigarette smoke over which was another gown in a short fabric, designed and made by Danny Venida back when he wasn't such a big name in fashion. Mica tried on the gown and—with a little help from me—it was much too long (such as her height). It fitted her perfectly "Mom, can I wear this to my graduation?" she inquired, and what mother could resist such sight?

We had to have the gown shorted for our family friend's wedding, and I was told that I had to carefully wash, dry, and hang the gown in a safe place. Because Mica's school requires "Filipiniana-inspired" outfits for the graduates, Mommy made the gown requisite white finished fabrics to transform it into a Filipiniana. Mica's classmates were all my old gowns when she could have had an entirely new outfit made. "For sentimental reasons," she insisted. "But if you really wanted to go overboard," I said, "then you should wear my gown as your wedding." So, there I was, dressed in my bridal gown for my wedding gown, at the second Japanese typhoon we broke every superstition...

I'll LL remember attended in exhibition as our father and I marched Mica, wearing my wedding gown, march down Club Filipino's Balagtas Hall at the start of the graduation ceremonies of Community of Learners. She carried, now small, symbolic bouquet of flowers and remembered our own children and from which, with Mica's graduation, ours are very soon "graduating."

It's been CLA tradition to invite as its commencement speakers; not public figures who know hardly anything about the schools or the graduates, but parents and students who certainly know what life is like in the school, and what life becomes the graduates have learned or will learn to cope with.

One of these lessons is the value of a caring learning environment, as assessed by Sheri Gabrielle Lozano, one of the speakers on behalf of the graduates. Lozano said that she and her fellow graduates had come to realize that the school was not merely a school but a family. Sheri said she made it in the secondary unit with the help of understanding teachers and classmates, who would help with their homework and projects when they had to be excused from school for fun, especially when her "Chorus" sessions.

The parent speakers—Ed and Tessy Bunoz for the grade school graduates and Ed and Annie Sarmiento for the high school graduates—spoke well of the unique environment that CL provided, becoming a "second family" where everyone was a partner in the education and formation of the children discharging in it. Ed and Annie, whose daughter had been in a schoolmate many and chose friend of Mica's, spoke of Sheri's graduate beauty to the school, even when they moved to Antipolo and contemplated transferring her to a more convenient campus.

* * *

"WHAT is one define commitment?" asked Fely de los Angeles Bautista, director of Community of Learners. She then went approached many times in the past. Teacher Fely said, about "Community" CL, which is celebrating its 30th year (celebrity?). But the always thrust down such queries, she said, because "we are not a fast food." While she had no qualms about shutting the doors to phone-in-a-day schools, she said, "sharing is an opportunity" Our identity is defined by the students, the parents, the entire CL family. It is not just a physical space, but the strength of our connections.

The theme "To remain covenantal-ties" is definitive. Fely added, as findings have since validated their belief that children do better in a small, intimate, personal learning environment. There is individual attention, so that by the time they are mature level in the school to reach, and have personal and excellent teachers.

Teacher Bets encouraged for talk to parents a positive idea, offered by teacher Mary Jane Ibañez, Ed and Annie Bolilia as a commitment and "One Hundred Years" by Fire for Pilipinas, third stress of typical classroom scenes and individual cameos, a flowing "silhouette" of a year's worth of memories, the accompanying song "If I Had a Moment," a brief song to the whole "positive classroom feeling."

It was the most moving moment of the afternoon for me, for instead, Mica and the other graduates would be just "I—ed (ished, I—ed I—ed. For the graduates, it was the end of a stage—for me, Mica's graduation signifies the beginning of a new stage. They were, indeed, graduating not just from high school but from adolescence as well.

* * *

SEE'S an idea, together with fellow graduate Dennis Patrick Lapa, said in their messages: "Journey road or step that we some across there is anxiety or road that connects our paths. The events can seem scattered or not be so clear. But I do not just about reaching your dreams; it is about stepping forward and making the best of it. So, that's 2004 and under, step forward. Everything that you have done in the past will help you. Time to come true. And the Dean is yet to come."

Our daughters, born amid-to-be-nephew to of the first "Double Power" events (if years ago, defined down the people of Kalayaan and Hall) afternoon and left behind childhood. She made one of the most momentous journeys of her young life, and she chose to make it wearing my wedding gown.

Faith and patience in Batanes

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

I ARRIVED this column from a terrace facing the sea in Basco while waiting for the return flight to Manila. Behind me are wind-swept mountains rising majestically from the sea, rubbing hills and verdant valleys dotted with grazing animals, and ribbons of roads and clear vehicles.

A few days ago, I told my wife Gemma, who has come to these northernmost islands on an official mission, "Well, we finally got here, the proverbial end of the road." I would make it back to Manila. I had prepared for an open-ended holiday, packing enough clothes and bringing enough books to cover the contingency of being stranded in an island known for its unpredictable weather.

But I tried to go to the airport early, waiting up early for the van to arrive. Basco Spirit flights to Batanes, though the days were clear two hours already, the flight was canceled because of the weather over Cagayan. There are no islands. The Basco islands are cut off from the rest of the country by strong winds and rough seas for at least seven months during the year. Batanes is the one of the archipelago impassable for about eight months of the year.

I don't like traveling with no assurance of leaving, and so I wasn't sure I wanted to make stock-up meetings. The Ramos has the kind of patience that grows with years of living in grave uncertainties. Without second thoughts, she re-booked our flights and accommodations, and urged me not to unpack the bag I was bringing to Batanes. "If we're going to Batanes," she said wisely, "we have to be in it for the long haul."

The cities over Basco were starting to fill with intervening clouds when we landed. Elsewhere in the country it is summer. But not in Batanes, where you can make up on a sunny and crisp December like morning, bake in the coconut islands, and head of a tropical one in the afternoon, and retire to the evening with a little typhoon banging at your door and windows. Nowhere else has just one area so lot of heat, a rain or three instead islands and the beautiful swans, all 16,000 of them, in a more interesting experience.

The terrain is stunning. I have never seen anything to remember. While Katitu are giving talks to public officials in the first state of the Civil Service Commission to visit these parts, I toured the capital town of Basco on a borrowed motorcycle—for how long I don't remember. I found

TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to
[illegible]

Editor Juan F. Sarmiento Jr.

Aquino: I'm the intelligent choice

IT used to be that presidential candidates tap running mates from another ideal group. Thus, if the presidential aspirant is from Luzon, he will get a vice presidential candidate from either the Visayas or Mindanao. The idea is for the presidential candidate to get the support of the running mate's bailiwick.

Strategists of certain candidates in the two previous presidential elections subscribed to this idea. Fidel Ramos of Pangasinan chose Lito Osmeña of Cebu as his running mate in 1992, while Ramon Mitra of Palawan joined forces with Marcelo Fernan of Cebu. In 1998, Raul Roco of Camarines Sur chose Irene Santiago of Davao as his running mate.

In the 2004 elections, this equation has been thrown out the window. All the five presidential candidates and the three vice presidential aspirants hail from Luzon—Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is from Central Luzon while her running mate Noli de Castro is from Southern Tagalog; Fernando Poe is from Metro Manila and so is his running mate Loren Legarda; Roco is from the Bicol region and Herman Aquino is from Central Luzon.

Presidential candidates Panfilo Lacson and Eddie Villanueva have no running mates.

As part of the Inquirer's citizen-based coverage of the elections, we are featuring today the stand of Aquino on issues. Talk of the Town featured De Castro on April 1 and Legarda on March 28.

I stand on my qualifications

By Herman Aquino
Vice Presidential candidate
Alyansang Pagbabago

Running on my personal record and experience. I am offering an intelligent choice for our president.

I am now being dubbed "ang HP namin sa C"—Salvacion, Ambuklao, Ambuklao, Binga, Ipo, Caliraya, Botocan and Lumban.

I am not the only one with qualifications and I am not beholden to anyone.

As part of Bayi Kita Muna sa Pagbabago, I deliver our Agenda of Hope, which calls for: Honest government; Opportunity for employment; Peace and order; Power; Productivity; Prosperity; Education and Environment for sustainable development.

Subscribing to the Aksyon Demokratiko principle that people are more important than institutions, I focus my platform on Filipinos and how programs and policies can best benefit them. This platform of governance puts special emphasis on housing and energy, areas where I have the most experience.

Unemployment

The main objective is a healthy economy, which should be able to address unemployment and assess the issues dominating our time. Simply put, we need to create employment jobs to as many people as possible but education and proper training must be emphasized.

Investors, local and foreign, must be encouraged. Investment must be properly channeled. A healthy and fair investment environment must be provided and the country's problems must be properly addressed.

Poverty

The key to our poverty problem is the establishment of a credible and honest government. We give to the ministries to provide livelihood for the people. Improve the standard of living and provide people with opportunities for self-improvement.

Free education and the provision of an environment that will ensure full employment must likewise be encouraged.

Debt, deficit

A credible, respected and honest government will give us the moral authority to negotiate in restructuring debts with creditors. Likewise, debt-swap arrangements should be pursued. With regard to the budget deficit, I will push for more effective tax collection and we must clamp down on non-performance.

Globalization

Globalization is a reality that cannot be ignored. As stated in our Agenda of Hope, we should maximize or actively participate in rules-based, member-driven organizations such as the World Trade Organization, keeping in mind the pursuit of a more equitable and fairer global trading system for developing countries. But we must make certain that safety measures are properly placed in order to protect our local markets and enable them to compete in the global market.

Corruption

This is a problem that may be hard but not impossible to address. There must be consequences in public office; strict monitoring procedures; and appointments only of people of known integrity and probity. Intolerance is leadership by example. But in a side, there must be zero tolerance for corruption.

Pork barrel

The projects to which pork barrel goes may be necessary but there is a need for more transparency and accountability in the project selection and use of funds. The people need to know where their money is being spent. The legislature branch shall oversee the funds while the executive implements the projects.

Power rates

As chair of the committee on energy while I was in the House of Representatives, and member of the bill creating the Department of Energy, I am deeply affected by the way the energy issue is being handled.

The high cost of energy must be properly addressed to ensure transparency and reasonable prices of all forms of energy through the establishment of an efficient competitive energy market. Toward this end, the government should reconsider the mandatory privatization of the wholesale electricity spot market and continue to renegotiate existing power purchase agreements with the independent power producers to ensure that such agreements are not only legal and financial but also beneficial to the end user, the consumers.

We must make the energy markets more efficient in order to reduce the cost of electricity. Likewise, we must lessen the country's reliance on imported fossil fuel as an energy source and take advantage of indigenous energy resources.

We must also implement the following.

- Ensure new patrony of the review and renegotiation of IPP contracts.
- Push for the passage of the Transco Franchise Bill and sell the generation units.
- Push for the passage of a Renewable Energy Law that will integrate and implement policy and regulatory reforms to encourage the development of the market for renewable energy.
- Develop the countryside to micro hydro and solar technologies and promote their mass electrification option for barangays.
- Review the tax structure for energy to protect the interest of the investors, both current and prospective, and the consumers.

Food security

Increase food production, encourage, strengthen and give incentives to agriculture and fishing, provide competitive market, improve farm-to-market roads and other facilities and regulate importation.

Serious efforts must be made to distribute land to the tiller.

Environment

Optimize the use of the environment and at the same time protect it for future generations.

Charter change

The Constitution, while containing our fundamental laws must not be so rigid as to fail to address our present needs. There may be provisions that need to be changed.

However, any change in the Charter must be made through a duly elected constitutional convention and whatever that body decides, for as long as ratified by the Filipino people, should form part of the Constitution.

Death penalty

We are against death penalty because the purpose of imprisonment is to rehabilitate criminals and to make them become civic citizens. By implementing the death penalty, this objective will not be served. Moreover, there is also the prospect of being meted out the death penalty does not put a stop or minimize criminality.

Executive

Impeach President Joseph Estrada must be given a fair trial and the opportunity to be heard and defend himself.

People power

The Constitution is clear that "the Philippines is a democratic and a republican State. Sovereignty resides in the people and all governments authority emanates from them."

The essence of democracy is people empowerment. The members of the government must come from the people. Their right of speech, of expression and to peaceably assemble in order to air their grievances must be respected and should not be curtailed.

Moros ill-gotten wealth

All ill-gotten wealth, regardless of source—whether from the Marcoses or from any other person or family—must be returned to the people. But we have to wait for the decision of the court regarding these assets.

Terrorism(sic)

We aim to keep the peace table open while adhering to the principle that Mindanao must be led by Mindanaoans.

Important also is the establishment of a government that is respected and recognized by the people. A government that has firm principles. A government that properly addresses the problems of the people especially with respect to security.

Terrorism

Terrorism is a "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience." It is to instill confusion, fear, intimidation; it is a deliberate use of violence against civilians for political or religious ends.

Violence has no place in any organized community. I am against any form of terrorism. The community of nations must be one in fighting this threat.

Foreign policy

The Philippines is an active member of the family of nations whose aim are based on mutually beneficial and fair economic ties; an international rule of law. As such, we must continue with our ties not only with the United States and China but also with the rights of the Asean nations, Japan, South Korea, and countries of the Pacific Rim, the European Union, countries of South Asia and ties to America.

Supreme Court and economic issues

By virtue of the doctrine of separation of powers in the government, we recognize the independence of the judiciary.

Its primary role is to interpret whether the law has been followed. They have the power of judicial review. The Supreme Court should, however, recognize the line between business and the law and should be careful about stepping into executive prerogative.

Jueteng

The government has provided legal forms of gambling. Jueteng is not one of them. Jueteng, illegal and illegitimate, is a social problem.

While jueteng as a form of gambling is against the law, I look at it as symptomatic of a social problem. We have to get to the root of things. We have to solve the root cause and underlie why it has become a part and parcel of our society. It appears that there must be appropriate regulatory measures.

Population

To date, the Philippines is one of the most unpopulated countries. Estimates of population growth are about 2 percent. Jueteng is one area flourishing the most. We are with contraception. It is also outside an education process to bring about changes in attitude. There must be a principled cooperation between and among the different sectors of our society, including the Church.

Filipino couples must be informed, encouraged and given the choice of contraception or family planning alternatives acceptable to them and consistent with their personal and religious convictions.

Divorce

The Commission is dead-wide the State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic social institution.

Abortion

I am against abortion. I uphold the constitutional protection given to the life of the unborn and the right of the unborn from interruption. Our penalties and written must be taught respectively.

Housing

As former minister of Human Settlements and the first chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), I aim to provide decent but affordable housing for the populations, particularly the lower brackets.

Housing and urban blight are part of the larger problems of poverty and unemployment. But this problem must be addressed immediately.

Our housing program must confront the slum-squatter aspect of social housing, which addresses the tragic shortcomings of the past, and the more productive aspect of economic housing, which contributes to the future development of the economy.

The social housing problem can be seen in the thousands of squatter communities in urban areas. Possibly 30 to 40 percent of urban dwellers are squatters. But we should go beyond robin-robin in the old-mendicant bee small-scale Habitat for Humanity.

Learning from the many failures and misdirections of the past, the Social Housing Problem Program should be based on the following: The most critical component is land, which is reasonably close to sources of livelihood. We should focus on whole communities of squatters. Because of the scale of the problem, we should only accept programs with high cost-benefit ratios.

We must provide incentives for local government units, civic organizations, locally based NGOs to assist slum economy problems. We can tap underlined land of the national government, many of which are squatted upon, as models for land reform projects which may be copied by the private sector. Cheap modes of transportation, e.g. rail or water, to link relocation sites to livelihood centers must also be developed.

A few programs of the past have addressed these issues albeit in very limited fashion. The Community Mortgage Program (CMP), initiated during the time of the HUDCC, should be reinstituted and expanded. Local government initiatives arising from the CMP participatory dance in the cities of Naga and Cebu, should be encouraged.

The Program for Economic Housing should focus on how to dramatically expand private sector participation to fulfill segments of mass housing: residential land development, home construction and mortgage financing. The extent to done to reduce bottlenecks.

Some examples of the approach are the following:

- Increasing the supply of land for affordable housing can be done by giving tax breaks to landowners who develop land for economic housing and/or by imposing an "idle land tax" for non-development.
- Banks should be encouraged to increase their portfolios of affordable mortgages by allowing a reasonable portion of deposits to risk their assets or an allowable reserve. Government financial institutions should encourage and support private banks (e.g. a liquidity mechanism) rather than undertaking activities before further into mortgage lending.
- All national and local government patrons and licenses required for the development, sale and title issuance of a house and lot must be simplified. The development process should be streamlined by: a) one-stop processing centers; b) requiring only licenses and permits for inspection of Land Use Regulatory Board, which will then, for a fee, ensure all the many other permits and licenses required.
- Subdivisions should be undertaken to maximize conservation materials storage and increase labor productivity. Among these are: a) standardize size of house components like doors, windows, jambs, beams; b) promote the use of locally available materials and technology.

Education

"Basic Guidance Skills" is managed to our guiding vision for Philippine education. We will pursue the goal of a graduate in every home. College education must be for free. It is our mission to assure a society of literate women, men and children.

We must improve student-training, literacy and continuing education and the quality of the nation's graduates.

A priority will be the promotion of vocational literacy among Filipinos and the development of the indigenous culture.

Prostitution

Legalizing prostitution is admitting failure. It dehumanizes the human body of economic opportunities, but if provided with the right atmosphere, this social problem can be minimized, if not totally eradicated.

Gay rights

Gays, like any citizens, have rights that must be respected. They must be recognized as beneficial citizens of our nation. They can be as productive as any man or woman. In fact, many have excelled in the various fields of endeavors. The likes of Rene Salud, Ricky Reyes, Jose Rizal and others have made us proud.

They must be provided with an environment where they can maximize their potentials as individuals and as a group.

National issues

People are our wealth. The health of the Filipino people is a cornerstone in accomplishing this mission. We believe that health is not the absence of disease but the presence of a state of well-being. We must maintain a health program that is sustainable and responsive to the needs of our people.

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bargenia

CAMPAIGN CASUALTY
A streamer near the airport in Kalibo, Aklan welcoming visitors to Boracay suffers at the hands of vandals whose target apparently was the face of President Macapagal-Arroyo prominently painted on the streamer.

Mayor who took over slain predecessor himself killed

THE MAYOR of Tanauan, Batangas was gunned down Saturday afternoon in downtown Cathedagan, the capital town of Samar, a few days after he assumed office to replace his predecessor who was earlier murdered.

The slaying of Francisco Montero, 54, came 26 days after the slayer of the same town, Antonio Diaz, was also dead in Calbayog City.

Eight other persons were killed in three separate election-related violence in Batangas and Laguna provinces yesterday.

Montero took over the post left by Diaz, Montero and Diaz belong to opposing political camps.

Montero, who was running for mayor, died instantly from a single shot fired by a gunman who was riding with another man in a motorcycle near the corner of Real Avenue and San Bartolome Street in the commercial district of Cathedagan at around 2:20 p.m. yesterday.

SPO3 Siegfred Dizon, Cathedagan police investigator, said the assailants, who were wearing ninja helmets, remain unidentified.

Dizon said the police were looking for pellets as one of the possible motives in the killing of Montero.

Batangas

In Batangas City, six persons suspecting Mayor Eduardo Dimacali were found dead yesterday, a day after homes of the mayor's relatives and supporters were raided.

Businessman Generoso Estanislo, 37, of Barangay Sta. Clara, this city, was found dead with three of his bodyguards and a male stationer about 50 meters below a bridge in Barangay Bolbog, Bauan town at 6 a.m.

Police identified the bodyguards as Eduardo Gunda, 46, Freddie Olimpiaga, 39, both from Oriental Mindoro, and Roy Dimaguiala, 25 of Davao, and his assistant Noel Isay, 17, of Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro.

The five bullet-ridden were found with their hands covered with masking tape and their hands tied behind their backs.

They also bore more than 15 stab wounds to the chest and back.

The victims were abducted at around 9:30 p.m. Friday.

Gunsmoke's hunter was among the homes of Dimacali's supporters that Mitsuoyas police raided before the bodies were found.

Police said around 30 armed men wearing bonnets, some in short pants and slippers, attacked Estanislo's house at around 9:30 p.m.

The men took $5 million in cash from Estanislo's vault.

Another man, driver Michael Mercano, 24, of Barangay Cuta, was also killed in Barangay Bolbog as he was riding a guard Honda Accord.

The armed men inside a van intercepted his vehicle, were out and opened fire at them, killing the driver and wounding two others.

Mercano's two companions were hit by bullets.

Mayor Dimacali said in a statement that the attacks were politically motivated.

He said he was under pressure from a candidate for governor.

He said when he refused to support the candidate, the candidate started to endlessly him in his campaign.

The candidate was heard saying that he would make the Dimacalis suffer and if Dimacalis were re-elected, he would not sit for another term.

In Calamba City, three persons, including a retired police superintendent, were killed while four others were seriously wounded after two bodies, allegedly supporting rival mayoral candidates here, shot at each other past midnight yesterday in Barangay Palo Alto.

Senior Supt. Edmund Endle, town police chief, identified those killed as Christopher Manalo, 30; Victor Medina, 40; and retired Supt. Domingo Castillon, 57.

Injured were Elena Abalona, 49, her son Anthony, 23; Manalo's mother Martha, 58; and Lanfred brother Alexanio, 45. All were residents of nearby Barangay Lagsuyin.

Endle said victims Christopher, Anthony and a certain Bonito Antillon were on their way home when brother Lanfrex, in a jeep, was hit the group at around 12:30 a.m. for no apparent reason.

Christopher died of multiple gunshot wounds on the way to the hospital. Anthony is in serious condition while Arthur was able to survive the attack by escaping.

Endle said he was uncertain if the attack was politically motivated.

"The suspects were apparently drunk when they shot the victims," said Endle.

Suspects reaching the location, however, said Lanfrex are the victim-starting down-point of retired Col. Jaimenio Lajara, the mayoral candidate of Lakas-CMD.

The Lanfrexes are said to be supporting Lajara while the victims were supporters of another mayoral candidate, incumbent Rep. Joaquin Chipeco. Florante S. Lafave, PDP Hoanon Bureau; Mel Rugene and Marlon Ramos, PDP Southern Luzon Bureau

Quezon political prisoners join hunger strike for their release

LUIS RAMOS, Laguna—In support of the nationwide protest fast of political prisoners, nine political prisoners in Quezon began their hunger strike on Sunday last Saturday.

The protest fast and some hunger is set to last until April 3 to call for the immediate release of political prisoners as agreed upon during the recent round of peace negotiations between the government and communist leaders.

The agreement was reached in a confidence-building measure in Oslo, Norway on Feb. 9-14.

Dan developed as communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal yesterday said the Communist Party of the Philippines welcomed the government's order to release 32 political prisoners languishing in jail in different parts of the country.

Rosal said: "It has taken the government more than three years to partly rectify the long standing injustice of keeping the political prisoners. Despite the long delay, the forthcoming release of 32 political prisoners is at least a good start for the building of confidence in the present peace negotiations."

Rosal noted that among those to be released is Jovanita Llenis, a nursing mother who has been inhumanely incarcerated for more than a year now. "We are relieved that the government finally heeded urgent demands for the release of Llenis and her child who is suffering from congenital heart defect."

The protest fast was started by Llenis last March 29. On Friday, the government declared that it would release 32 political prisoners, including nursing mothers, starting next week as part of its ongoing peace talks with communist rebels in Oslo, Norway.

But Rosal reminded the Macapagal administration that the 32 political prisoners are only part of the more than 300 political prisoners whose human rights continue to be violated and who should likewise be immediately released.

Alexis Allan Enriquez, secretary general of rights group Karapatan, said the hunger strike will be staged by the almost 300 political prisoners nationwide to "show their disgust and disappointment over the government's deliberate inaction on their plight." *Jeffrey T. Mallari Jr. and Clarice Cobling, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bets lose cell phones to NPA rebels

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—For refusing to pay the rebels' permit to campaign fee, a town councilor and a council-aspirant were divested of their cell phones and barred from campaigning by about 25 supposed New People's Army rebels in Sikis Tibobong, Barangay Quintin Remo, Mintes Padilla town in Negros Occidental.

Councilor Humphrey Estabaraya, who was campaigning for his wife, Imelda, and council-aspirant Jose Mandarinas, were on their way to Sitio Tibobong in the barangay on board two motorcycles on March 31, when they were flagged down by the rebels/men.

Capt. Guillermo Tavares, spokesperson of the army's 303rd Infantry Brigade, yesterday said Estabaraya and Mandarinas were asked to pay for campaign permits and when they failed to do so, their cell phones were taken.

They were released unharmed, Tavares added.

Supt. Virgilio de la Cruz, Mintes Padilla police chief, said Estabaraya and Mandarinas, who is the chair of Barangay 7 of the town, did not report the incident to the town police.

De la Cruz said the 15 armed men who stopped Estabaraya and Mandarinas from campaigning might be among the suspects who summarily executed three-old traitor Salvador Langreda in the barangay on March 9, an suspicion that he was a military informer.

Soldiers said they were conducting more patrols in the countryside where rebels had been sighted, to prevent them from further extorting from candidates.

The 303rd Infantry Brigade has condemned the collection of campaign permits by rebels from candidates.

Lt. Col. Rey Guerrero, 61st Infantry Battalion commander, said they have mentioned candidates in southern Negros Oriental paying campaign fees to the rebels.

Sweden backs forest plantations in RP

A visit by Swedish Ambassador Anniki Markovic to forest plantations in Oriental Mindoro on March 10 confirmed the acceptability of the policy to award forest lands for manmade plantations by deserving upland farmers.

A news release by the Far East Silvicultural Consultants Corp. (FESC) said trees grow five to 10 times faster in Philippine climate and soils.

FESC said it has coined "its unique cooperative blend of foreign funds and expertise and local land resources and labor" in San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro, among other places, "set to overcome long odds."

Led by Swedish managers, FESC had funds coming from investors from Sweden, a country "with a solid modern forest industry that is, however, urgently seeking new sources of wood and wood components."

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Ibrando Ir. Bueh, undersecretary for operations of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, who was with the Swedish ambassador, was optimistic that achieving the high standard of forest farming in Sweden is realistic goal for Filipino farmers, the news release added.

Southeast Mindoro Community-based Forest Management chair, and board members of the landholding community, also welcomed the prospects for wider support that the ambassador's upbeat appraisal of the visit, said the release.

Leaders of the Iraya Mangyan tribe also expressed satisfaction with the development.

The financial and technical assistance will enable the Mangyan to plant over 30,000 hectares of forest land. This is essential, as the eventual sale of such new wood resources is to feed a wood industry center in Calapan City.

ANTHONY (1) of the Denver Nuggets runs into Yao Ming of the Houston Rockets in the first quarter

3RD STRAIGHT

Nets Atlantic champs anew

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Lucious Harris matched his season high with 24 points, and the New Jersey Nets won their third straight Atlantic Division title with a 108-93 victory over the New York Knicks on Friday.

Aubrey Hagan added 23 points, Richard Jefferson had 16 and rookie Kenyon Martin, a current high 11 for the injury-depleted Nets, who took the division title when Detroit beat Milwaukee.

Stephen Marbury also scored 14 points for the Knicks, tied for seventh with Boston in the Eastern Conference.

In Seattle, Baby Bryant scored 21 points and Shaquille O'Neal notched 20 more as the Los Angeles Lakers rallied from a lopsided halftime deficit to down the Seattle SuperSonics, 97-86, for their 11th straight victory.

With the victory, Los Angeles (53-23) took a half game lead over idle Sacramento for the best record in the Western Conference.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Chauncey Billups had 31 points, seven rebounds and seven assists as Detroit downed Miami, 93-84.

Rasheed Wallace added 17 points after tying two games because of a sore back, and Detroit responded with its 11th win in 12 games.

In Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett scored 22 points, and Wally Szczerbiak added 20 as Minnesota downed Washington, 91-73.

Antawn Jamison spiked up an otherwise unremarkable night in the final minutes, when a breakaway score on the court and engaged an Associated Press scorekeeper and severely rubbed her.

Nazr Carroll, who had 13 points and seven assists, got a huge kick out of it—causing even Szczerbiak and planting a mock hug on his grinning teammate as the crowd chanted "Wally! Wally!"

Jerry Stackhouse scored 15 points for the Wizards.

In Denver, Marcus Camby had 28 points and 21 rebounds, and Carmelo Anthony added 20 points as Denver beat Houston, 110-106.

With the victory, the Nuggets moved within percentage points of eighth-place Portland in the Western Conference playoff draw.

Yao Ming had 25 points and 10 rebounds for Houston.

Kobe case

EAGLE, Colorado—Prosecutors urged Kobe Bryant to enter a plea in the rape charges against him in order to speed the process towards trial.

Just one week after the verdict of Kobe Bryant's alleged victim pleaded with the judge to ensure a quick trial in case he loses his daughter's calling, the prosecutor, Eagle County District Attorney Mark Hurlbert, did likewise.

AP

Complete results: Portland 108, Denver 98; New Jersey 108, Washington 93; Cleveland 91, Chicago 90; Orlando 97, Indiana 91; Houston 110, Minnesota 106; Boston 87, Golden State 81; Seattle 97, Detroit 93; LA Clippers 89, Minnesota 88; Seattle 86, San Antonio 82; Sacramento 91, Utah 88; New Orleans 79,

Duke takes unfamiliar role

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Duke finds itself in the rare position of being regarded as the underdog ahead of its Final Four clash with Connecticut at the Alamodome on Saturday.

Despite being the only team to reach the Final Four as a number one seed in the regionals, Duke is conceding the spotlight to a team peaking at the right time.

"They have a very powerful basketball team," said Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, who knows something about power basketball, having been in the coaching profession 15 times in the last 16 years.

The survivor of the Duke-Connecticut matchup will face the winner of the Oklahoma State-Georgia Tech semifinal for the national title on Monday night.

Connecticut (31-6), the second seed coming out of the Phoenix Regional, has won seven consecutive games in storming San Antonio.

The Huskies have the nation's top shooting defense, limiting opponents to 38.8 shooting. And they are unbeaten at home with a 19-0 record, also the best in college basketball.

But it's hard to be more confident than Duke, which at the Final Four is, generally, a three-time champion, has won five last six trips to the national semifinals.

Reuters

Annika's short game clicks

Swedish ace up by 1; Rosales 5 off

LOS ANGELES—Annika Sorenstam, her chief game there when the grooves, shot a 4-under 68 Friday to take the first-round lead in the Office Depot Championship.

Sorenstam wowed and in the greens on a day when the putting surface was unpredictable. Sorenstam was one shot in front of Jill McGill and Meg Mallon in the 54-hole event.

Sorenstam, the tournament champion two of the past three years, was among only 11 players to better par on the course with a heavy roll on some others.

Karrie Webb, a two-time LPGA player of the year and winner of six majors, started off with a bogey and kept going downhill on the range as an 81—her worst round since she joined the tour in 1996.

The 1999 tournament champion, Webb finished her opening round into three with eight bogeys, a double bogey and a triple bogey.

Cancer that listed even worse, struggling to an 82 that left her well

for 136th to the 144-player field.

Last week's Kraft Nabisco winner, Grace Park, was in contention with a 72 But left her tied for 22nd. In the same branch was the Philippines' Jennifer Rosales. In R1 Feb, who beat Sorenstam by one shot to win the Los Angeles title two years ago, had a five-round 74 and was tied for 31st.

Sorenstam was coming off a 15th-place finish in the Kraft Nabisco, the LPGA's first major of the year. She didn't have her shot to center, which has earned her to 49 career wins—nothing last week.

Johnson up

ST SIMONS, Georgia, Zach Johnson used a run of four birdies in his final six holes for a 6-under 66 to take the second-round lead after another windy day in the Bell-South Classic on Friday.

He had a 9-under 135 total for a two-stroke lead over 2000 winner Ben Crane, Craig Bowden and Tim Herron Jr.

AP

SORENSTAM reacts to a birdie putt on the 8th hole.

SPORTSWATCH

Free basketball clinics launched

SPORT SERIOUS and SM malls in cooperation with Burlington socks and Cherifer mouthguards recently launched a free basketball clinics for boys and girls ages five to 14 years old and a basketball shootout for all ages. After a successful run at SM Southmall in Las Piñas, the Burlington camp clinic came to SM Lanang on April 10, 17 and 18. Conducted by champion coach and ex-PBA player Eric Gaston and Olympian coach and former PBA scorer Ronnie Magsanoc, the Burlington project will also host SM Megamall on April 25, 26 and 29 and SM Mall of Asia on April 30, May 1 and 2 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The basketball camp will be divided into three groups: 5 and 6 years old (Dribbling fun practices [exercises/drills] taught at SM Department Store or any store from Sportswear section. Other sponsors are the Dunkaroos, Bonbon, Bigas Bites and Ascot Computers. Visit store or mall of operations for only amount of Cherifer [mouthpiece] or Sportswear items). Visit the contact lines and call enrolling points. For more info, please call 897-1623 or 896-3014.

All set for 'Bakbakan' 8-sock derby

THE BIGGEST-EVER (2003) "Bakbakan Open National 8-Sock Derby" is all set at Bangger Mega Complex on April 12, 14, 15, 19, 21 and 25 with Tournament Director, Mr. Ed Pangilinan, announcing that it has 16 participants. For an entry fee of only P15,000, the guaranteed prize is a whopping P3 million. The elimination rounds (3 rounds) on April 12, 14 and 15, followed by the semifinals (2 rounds) on April 19 and 21. Jolly qualifiers will advance to the grand finals (3 rounds) on April 25. Spearheading this year's "Bakbakan" is the National Federation of Sumotori Wrestlers (NFSW), an umbrella organization of 73 guest federations and clubs from all over the country. The objective of holding a "Bakbakan" among sumotori wrestlers nationwide started in 1999 spearheaded by PAGPA, GFGAM and NSEA. Their first joint project is the Bakbakan Regional Derby Series. Other interesting news: RIDERS and CITY-BUS arms invited to join. Marlon Bautista participants may contact Pangilinan at 806-2016, 806-6636, (0921) 880-1 (contact Shirley, Audrey or Ding).

Fisterans features 15-round bout

MANILA Bay's heavyweight boxing features an exciting 15-rounder in the light flyweight division. Mr. Jennifer ranked #8 worldwide Ronald Jones de Guzman has world ranking against #9 No. 8 Danny Peña at 108 lbs. The light main held last week at the state of the art Joe Cuenco Building, home to Fisterans, Taguig. Fisterans are Philippine Daily Inquirer sports columnist Mr. Manolo, Ed Picores, Quirino Herrera and Sally Tabanag. The show is slated at 8 a.m. Sundays on RPN-9 and is backed by Samsung Electronics Phils. Corp. and Tambay Flour. Gold Power Volcano at 5 p.m.

KNIFE OR CHOPS. Winners of the recent Samsung Amateur Tour national grand finals at Mt. Malarayat display more trophies than they can carry. From right, Jaime Pilones (Class A), Tom Sicat-Cledera (Class B), Carmelenda Villanueva-Dalida (Class A), Jovi Pagunsan (men's championship), Marca Dilao (men's Class B) and Carlitas Magno (Class C). Flowing from are Mike Carl of Mt. Malarayat and Bay Blue Gramps. Highlights of the tourney will be shown on Solar Sports (Channel 21 on Home and Sky Cable) tomorrow, April 5 from 4-5 p.m.

Rosal steals show in Sta. Elena Cup

MANILA executive the Road was The Man is the eighth edition of the Sta. Elena Cup members game tournament recently after he tore the course apart with a bogey-free gross of eight-under-par 64 to one of the two rounds he played at the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed course.

Posting as the guest partner of Jude Dalmacion, Rosal gunned down four birdies each on the front and back nines of the course including three of the first four and three in a row from the 14th for the record-breaking performance.

It was the lowest ever round in Sta. Elena Cup history. Rosal's effort actually broke the existing course record of 66 he it will and he owning a shot the field played from the blue tees.

Rosal and Dalmacion were on to clinch the low gross plum which had Globe Telecom, Royal Caribbean International, Skydream International Airlines, Omega watches, Toyota Motors Philippines and Mizuno/Winner Sports as exclusive sponsors. Karl Plata Mfg./Yamaha was hole-in-one prize donor.

Overshadowed by Rosal's sizzling game was the capture of the overall net crown by the tandem of Chris Cayanga and Niki Ocampo. They each scored 66 and 70 points, respectively for a 169 total for 26 holes, 29 under par.

Francisco Bertuis and former tennis ace Dietrich Santos bagged the Class A trophy, Belwin Hugo and Mario Bautista took the Class B plum and the pair of Jun Villacorta-Jhonny Gaston topped Class C.

Fermin Santos scored 158 to beat the team of Bio Co Jaypee Agustin/Ira Ibay, Iruga Bautista scored 163 to finish seven ahead of Edgar Jose Ho de Guzman while Villacorta-Gaston combined for 164 then nipped Robert Dee-Rodolfo Manuel in the scoreboard.

The top finishers

Overall net: 169 Chris Cayanga-Niki Ocampo; Scratch gross: 142 Jojo Gangcuangco-Frank Dario; 143 Kevin Sanchez-Ariel Gamez; 145 Bio Co Jaypee Agustin-Ira Ibay; 146 Jose Ho de Guzman-Rudy Bautista; 150 Edgar Jose Ho de Guzman-Jude Dalmacion; 154 Alfonso Kuan-Antonio Gaston; 156 Jun Villacorta-Jhonny Gaston; 159 Fermin Santos-Rodolfo Manuel; 160 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 161 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 163 Belwin Hugo-Mario Bautista; 164 Jun Villacorta-Jhonny Gaston; 169 Francisco Bertuis-Dietrich Santos; 170 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 171 Jaypee Go-Antonio Tee; 173 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 174 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 175 Jaypee Go-Antonio Tee; 177 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 178 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 179 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 180 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 181 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 182 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 183 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 184 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 185 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio; 186 Jaypee Yu-Bill Antonio;

Key Apo top pick in imports race today at Santa Ana

HORSE-trained import Bay Apo will finally be tested today when he takes on three other strong gallopers in the kalaban by of the 2004 Philracom Imported Horse Stakes Series at the Santa Ana Park.

Coming off three decisive victories in the open group second-L this 4-year-old imported colt from Australia, owned and bred by sportsman Antonio Payot, has steadily emerged as the leading contender for this race's top award title.

Regular rider

Having raced exclusively at the Santa Ana Park since his debut last January, the fourteen hemisphere-bred gallopers by Bonapeo (USA) out of Mirage (USA) will be ridden by regular skipper Antonio Abcede Jr. for the 1,400-m journey.

Challenging Bay Apo are stable mates Wind Lizard and Royal Catch from the Gerard Ergueta Racing Stable and reinvented campaigner Tom Cantonment.

The Philracom-backed event carries a total guaranteed purse of P400,000, with P229,000 going to the winner. Second to fourth places are also assured of P103,250, P56,250 and P22,500 in prizes, respectively.

Leading support to the day's main event are the running of the General Edwago Foundation Cup race, two P400,000 guaranteed events sponsored by the Philracom.

Contenders

Running in the first group of top contenders over a distance of 1,600 m are Ardee King, Seniors, Homebrew, Boston, Cocktail, Rainmaker and Lord Gil which Betting is Twelve, Red Rose, Mr Classic, Dry Break and Silver Place head the second group over a shorter distance of 1,200 m.

Proceeds of the benefit races will be used in support of the General Edwago Foundation's numerous socio-civic projects.

A total of 13 races are set to dog off today at the Santa Ana Park starting at 1:30 p.m.

Roddick vs Coria for crown

BIRMINGHAM, Florida—US Open champion Andy Roddick advanced to the final of the Nasdaq-100 Open for the first time, playing nearly flawless tennis to beat Vince Spadea, 6-1, 6-3, on Friday.

Roddick took the first set in just 21 minutes and won seven consecutive games against fellow American Spadea, whose one modestly steady game unraveled in his first key Business semifinal.

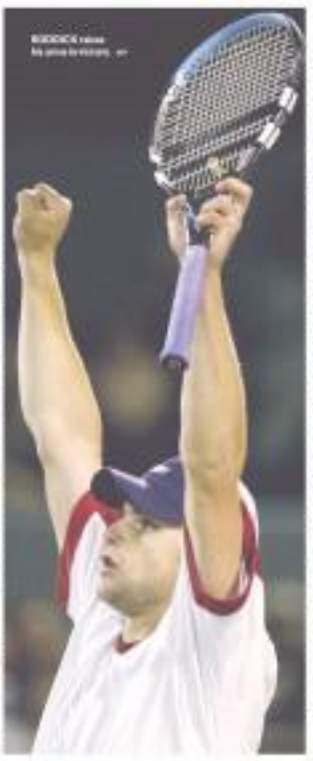
Roddick's opponent on Sunday will be No. 5-seeded Guillermo Coria, who overcame four match points to beat Fernando Gonzalez in an all-South American semifinal, 4-6, 7-6 (6), 6-1.

8-match layoff

Serena Williams will play for the women's championship on Saturday in her first tournament following an eight-month layoff. The two-time defending champion beat No. 9-seeded Elena Dementieva of Russia after setting a sweep of the Williams sisters after upsetting Venus in the quarterfinals.

The unseeded Spadea had been on a run over the past several days, including a 7-6 (4), 6-4 second-round win at age 29, but he struggled from the start against Roddick.

The No. 2-seeded Roddick came out flying with an ace and three service winners en route to the opening game of love. Along with big serves, he kept Spadea on the defensive by consistently pounding deep groundstrokes while committing just 11 unforced errors.



Mesmerizes

Whatever he did was mesmerizing as still play caught at age 47 as two-consecutive this month, but first tournament sponsored singles matches in the United States since 1996.

Hawthorne plans to play singles at the Rausch & Lomb championship next week and the following week at the Pontiac Circle Cup in Charleston, South Carolina. AP

Vicious cycle

(My 30th day and I will be at the Santa Ana Park today. OK, let me't read the lips of the epidemic image of 33 years, a world-class handicapping if we may say so. Between a Race 7 where the hottest aspect to mean Pedal-Power's days, is that 13-year-old Regional Champion and Royal Guide at the Imperial Stakes over 1,400 m. Decades ago, a Tom Gentleman. He race is practically a handicap since the best opponent of the winner's Top 3 races Supreme and Royal—we aren't run it!)

* * *

THE HOTTEST topic on and off the track remains Empire King's backlash result.

Alongside it was the 12-racing week opposition Jeffrey Leilana got for "not giving Empire King the full opportunity to win."

Full of crap, the buying issue I was flooded to get out.

For them, that lousy ride by Leilana was equivalent to "deliberately losing a race" to the "no-class" network at the "no-class" racetrack where the race happened should have wanted Leilana a trifle penalty.

The pre-riding sentence was a One-racing time rider left Leilana clouded than we'd need so-set rich exchequer King should have been stopped a Race-Course ban, if not Countless none that spree.

"Yung reason nga e lang na yung dinaming mga gawain," comment of a favorite Even Del Pan, Sir Ann. "Walang hustisia dito."

Speaking of Gentleman Gadalanda, this should also be applied to those who suppose bans on jockeys and, later on, sort of forgive them by reducing their suspension or penalty assigned.

"Kasi, nanagsing ang isa't sa mga datalong magkaroon may sapak lang ako sakay so sarado ul. Parang kawal lahat lahat eh," said another fellow from Pero.

The other hand, Mr Dan Bonoan seemed that the Leilana ride probably suspended near Ted Fuller is already back in the saddle and he has yet to serve out his penalty.

One reader commented:

"Pag ako jockey ang kinalaban ng puro si apeks. Pag pinagdi na ako kung saan ang suspension."

This may be the case of an jockey from Cavo rider's luck in the olympic although he just got the chance recently on Sang's Choice.

Let's see if Jeff Zarate, sa last only a few days back and whose suspension starts this coming week, would be in action again in the next few days or so.

* * *

Jurisdiction Jacob received a 52-race week penalty last week. Rodel officials also give us to his appeal and cut his suspension short?

Here's another comment from reader Ryan Rolando Reid-S, Tarsier, Rob-Rolls, Sampaloc, Manila.

"Sang mga kinareng ano si sa magkaibigan again, kaibi mangyaridebild ed sa pagkawala. Parang sa mga tarde na lang yung sumpong sapod-sabay-kaibigan. Kundi's no more talaga sayang mga ordinaryong nanonara."

And since we're heading into the Lenten Break, the buying business are pressing their "respite" period to make it "no-ride" demands and racing officials would see the light and mend their ways during that penalties pa.

* * *

The last time we were in Barrio, the "it" places were Boysen's, Cocomangas and Park Pubs. It was a favorite venue for Asian beach volleyball short pentathlon.

Finding his date at a total of eighteen to you untill along in 6 am crotch because there are innocently then.

They said Boysen's is no longer the-most popular that it was today popular beach. But I'll have to find out in person's tablet canal and enjoy do refreshingly cool seaters again after the holy Week.

Steven Hawk

* * *

E-mail Our Horse to vvillanueva@inquirer.com.ph or sikegal@yahoo.com

Schumacher gets Grand Prix pole spot

SAKHIR, Bahrain—World champion Michael Schumacher's Formula One domination continued here Saturday as he claimed pole position for Sunday's inaugural Bahrain Grand Prix.

Schumacher scored his third successive pole of the season and the 58th of his career after hauling Ferrari teammate Rubens Barrichello to qualifying by the Formula One Brazil Pit crew to take place in the Middle East.

Barrichello had set a quick time mid-way through the qualifying hour and only Schumacher could best it with a lap time of 1min 30.199sec—almost four-tenths of a second quicker than the Brazilian.

The German has been on pole for the previous two races in Australia and Malaysia and has gone on to record comfortable victories.

Williams pair Juan Pablo Montoya and Ralf Schumacher, who were qualified to the pre-qualifying session and had looked set to take pole, will start from third and fourth on the grid respectively.

Both Finns enjoyed another positive day with the fifth and sixth fastest times, although Takuma Sato got the better of teammate Jenson Button, Renault's Jarno Trulli, Toyota pair Olivier Panis and Cristiano Da Matta, and McLaren's David Coulthard completed the top ten.

McLaren driver Juan Pablo Montoya failed to set a lap time after returning to the pit-lane and will start from the back of the grid, while Renault's Fernando Alonso had a day to forget with 17th place.

Another Williams driver was the quickest of the only runners in the sessions as he led Eugene driver Mark Webber. AFP

BUTTON

Stevens leaves door open for Thorpe

SYDNEY—Ian Thorpe may still have a chance to defend his Olympic 400-meter freestyle title at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, even if he does not qualify for the individual event, Australian swimming coach Doug Stevens indicated on Saturday.

Thorpe plunged Australian swimming in to shock on the opening day of the eight-day Australian championships when he was disqualified from the heats of the 400-meter freestyle on March 27 for a false start.

Despite repeated calls from the public and the media over the next few days for Thorpe to be given another chance in the event, Australian Swimming (ASI) insisted from that the disqualification would remain in place.

The first race in the program in the final, Grant Hackett and Stevens, qualified for August's Olympics at the 400-m freestyle, but crisis and Stevens should step aside if he qualified in his second, the 1,500-m freestyle, on Saturday.

Stevens, 23, finished second in 15:01.04 to Olympic champion Hackett, in 14:55.48, on Saturday's 1,500-m freestyle and could then hide behind their 4-by-200-m freestyle relay team.

"The last group to wait for the heats to be announced later on [Saturday night]," Stevens said.

Thorpe won the 100-m and 200-m freestyle finals in his home pool to qualify to choose individual events.

Libby Lenton, who broke Irish Olympic champion Inge de Bruijn's 100-m freestyle world record on Wednesday, has also qualified in the 50-m freestyle after her victory in Saturday's final. Reuters

Rookies bolster Tour cast

Turn to page A13

Pablo, Leonardo Lingao Jr., Elmer Alcaraz, Jessen Gaddi and Dandi Tejidor.

The 2004 Tour season of 17 stages due variously on the Luzon island. But you, the race will pass through the same islands east-west side—Cagayan Valley—making a breathtaking run on the northern Ilo Ilo a the western Bataan.

Lim's riders about combing the countryside of unpolished talent has begun with a program spearheaded by his group of campers, which will adopt junior riders—17 and below—who will be selected for the Philippine.

The Philcycling has to its fold more than half a dozen youngsters, some of whom are sons of former Tour champs, who are already part of the Philcycling's development pool.

"The Tour would help us much in our efforts to bring out the future of Philippine cycling," said Lim. "Aside for little, we would schedule one elimination and from those youngsters we could develop world-champions."

5-day San Lazaro racing on tomorrow

THE MANILA Jockey Club Inc. is set to host another spectacular program of races starting tomorrow (April 5) at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

Thursday night's racing marks the 52.5% live-day Holy Week schedule and officially ends March 27's first year of successful operation at the country's newest and most modern racing facility.

Tomorrow's opening off the heels of a successful race meet at the SLLP recently during which a phenomenal gross value of P46.2 million was posted.

The ensuing schedule includes eight racing on Sunday (April 6) and full-cards of 12 races each on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday (April 7, 10, 11). No races have been scheduled for Holy Thursday and Good Friday (April 8 and 9).

Under the revised schedule of racing approved by the Philracom, available jockey races will run out of 9 races each starting at 1 p.m. while weekend and holiday races will consist of 12 races each starting at 9 a.m.

Highlight of the racing program is the running of the second leg of the Road to Triple Crown trilogy on Sunday (April 11), which advanced a Genuine field of 3-year-olds competing over a distance of 1,600 m.

Heading the field competing in the P750,000 Triple Crown stepup race are Empire King and such stud Dixie Dash.

The other hopefuls are Albatross, Andrei's Time, Balangay River, Cat's Jewel, Cover Girl, Georgeous Lead, I Love The Game, Jaycee's Confidence, Kheb, Know Lord, Semper Ipsis, Shadowfax and Trail.

RACING TIPS

Race 1—1. Tour Deuce 2. Lady Lover 3. Dickering 4. Stars Iron 5. Nightlighter

Race 2—1. Babaenking 2. Tomcat Track 3. Bold Admiral 4. Native Instinct 5. Lasso

Race 3—1. Tourist 2. Jumbo Song 3. Lost Idol

Race 4—1. Allan-D 2. Red Dahlia 3. Mom Bravo 4. Ge Bless 5. Dad's Lady

Race 5—1. Power 2. My Lucky Gee 3. Golden Harvest 4. Knighty 5. Harry Potter

Race 6—1. Tour Deuce 2. Lady Lover 3. Dickering 4. Stars Iron 5. Nightlighter

Race 7—1. Babaenking 2. Tomcat Track 3. Bold Admiral 4. Native Instinct 5. Lasso

Race 8—1. Allan-D 2. Red Dahlia 3. Mom Bravo 4. Ge Bless 5. Dad's Lady

Race 9—1. Power 2. My Lucky Gee 3. Golden Harvest 4. Knighty 5. Harry Potter

Race 10—1. Babaenking 2. Tomcat Track 3. Bold Admiral 4. Native Instinct 5. Lasso

Race 11—1. Allan-D 2. Red Dahlia 3. Mom Bravo 4. Ge Bless 5. Dad's Lady

Race 12—1. Power 2. My Lucky Gee 3. Golden Harvest 4. Knighty 5. Harry Potter

DAR distributes 81 hectares of hacienda owned by GMA husband

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) on Friday distributed to 66 beneficiaries about 81 hectares of land belonging to the family of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo in the towns of Binalbagan and Hinigaran, Negros Occidental.

At least 74 agrarian reform beneficiaries received Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs) for the 62 of the 81 hectares Exclusive Rights to Retained Area owned by Pedro Arroyo, uncle of the First Gentleman.

Nineteen hectares were also given to 24 beneficiaries of Hacienda Maraliza in Binalbagan, which was owned by Antonio Arroyo, also an uncle of the First Gentleman.

The 98 agrarian reform beneficiaries were farm workers and tenants of the two Arroyo landholdings. They were among the 1,950 beneficiaries who received their CLOAs in a ceremony graced by Agrarian Reform Secretary Jose Ma. Ralos at the public plaza here.

The CLOAs covered 2,400 hectares of land in Negros Occidental, which were covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

Ralos said the Arroyo have committed more than 700 hectares of their landholdings for agrarian reform. More than 300 hectares had already been distributed while the remaining 300 hectares were still being processed.

He said the Cloa distribution was the gift of President Macapagal-Arroyo to the people of Negros Occidental.

Ms Macapagal will celebrate her birthday on Monday. She was supposed to reportedly distribute the Cloas personally but there were changes in her schedule. She was 56 years old.

The First Gentleman's brother, Jorge, is running for representative under the Lakas-CMD party.

The Arroyo landholdings were part of the promises made by Ms Macapagal as part of her administration's implementation of the agrarian reform program.

Since it was signed into law, CARP has generated more controversy from financial interests and landowners who resisted the loss of their landholdings.

The implementation of CARP was delayed by landowner resistance and the agrarian reform department has been clogged with cases of landowners suing the government or farmers to keep their property.

CHALLENGE TO FPJ

Gloria calls for debate on Negros sugar industry

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo Friday challenged presidential aspirant Fernando Poe Jr. to a debate in Bacolod City on their plans for the sugar industry and what has been done for it over the years.

The President made the dare after Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Maranon, a stalwart of the Nationalist People's Coalition, was quoted as saying that he decided to support the bornean of his programs for the sugar industry.

"If Fpj has a clear plan for the sugar industry, then we should debate on that before the people of Negros Occidental," the President said in an interview over radio station dyLL here.

She will be in Negros Occidental this weekend for a series of rallies to woo the 1.4 million voters of the province that is considered a Macapagal bailiwick.

Maranon was among some 100 NPC members who switched support from President Macapagal to Poe.

When asked for her reaction to Maranon's shift to the camp of Poe, Ms Macapagal said she was happy that she has the continued support of the people of Negros Occidental.

She maintained that in three years that she has been president, she has implemented many measures to help the sugar industry.

"I am a daughter-in-law of Negros Occidental and I know its lifeblood is the sugar industry," she said, referring to her husband, Mike Arroyo, who belongs to the landed sugar planter clan from the province.

Ms Macapagal and her husband's family owned Hacienda Binalbagan and Isabela, whose main source of income is sugar. "The food on my table came from the sugar industry," she said.

President Macapagal noted that when she assumed the presidency in 2001, sugar then was not seen to enter with the break-even of the sugar industry to assess them that her administration would "make sure that all is done for the good of the sugar industry."

For the last two and half years, she said, production and prices of sugar have gone up.

When the sugar industry faced a crisis earlier this year due to the fall in sugar prices, Ms Macapagal said she immediately responded to their concern by among others, raising the tariff on imported protein sugar that had been giving undue competition to locally produced sugar.

She said she also appointed Angelo Reyes as "the anti-smuggling czar to help address the sugar industry's concern over rampant sugar smuggling.

She said she also directed the Bureau of Internal Revenue to defer the implementation of the advance value-added tax on the sugar industry pending further study, ordered the hastening of the repeal of sugar re-demonetization the local market, and directed the National Food Authority to buy the excess sugar to shore up prices.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo greets a crowd at the Batangas City port, reminding her campaign for a bill to be that also brought her to the country's sugar barrio Negros.

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INQUIRER Mindanao

The 'cuaresma' of my youth

By Bernard M. Oribe

BACK in the early '70s when I was a kid, cuaresma was observed with much solemnity and drama. The latter, of course, was literal because it seems just that — the drama or radio soap opera mostly about the passion of Christ.

Radio then was the ultimate entertainment as the war years between dramatized one piece in Tagog, Zamboanga City that burned down when a firetruck on its way to the fire overturned on the Malabang-Iligan highway. Some of the Maranao spectators were burned and we had 7Day broadcast and soon cracker biscuits for snacks because just as the dramatic scene would climax such as fulfill the seer's prophesy that the king's castle here would be inundated by a monstrous tidal wave, the announcer would say in his deep Chavacano baritone, "Mañana, the hanawit of having the youngest kid so I had to sneak into our poor neighbor and hear myself, along with other children, in a symbolic fear-tasting world portrayed by an Iloilano announcer who had videotaped between the lines of the script.

Earlier that week, our neighbor had those bamboo alternately bathed and left under the rain for hours, but if the volume still wouldn't improve, he would bump the radio a bit. Then, my patriarchal grandfather would take the helm of listening together — missed dialogues, enduring a salad of unruly kids and jockeying for that place near the speaker that had Vilma Santos smiling in a line that seemed much rounder than a satellite dish.

The cuaresma part was executed by Lolo Pitoning, Manay's uncle who lived with us until she died a virgin at the age of 94. She would distribute our ballpens to board enough clean, water and firewood as they were not allowed to do manual labor during Holy Week.

We were not allowed to laugh from Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday just as we were banned from playing and growing fatso on the pretext as we might dive up Christ's body. We had to walk slowly, on tiptoe if need be, so we might shake the house and the whole world and disturb the newly entombed Son of God.

Men, we were observed from eating pointed objects to avoid getting cut (or wounded) because it would take a year or two), a phenomenon my cousin swears was true.

On Good Friday, we were barred from taking a bath or else woe was the virtue when our elders would go bathing in streams and rivers. Were drifting was the fact that they would bathe in water soaked in pails under the sun without soaking it, creating bearable skin disease should we have the misfortune of using it.

And Lolo Pitoning would add that since God was dead and therefore confined inside them for the fear, the devil and all creatures of the underworld would roam on earth to feed on us.

Episodical, we would take up as many as Anna did so that she could whip us with purgatorial vim. With no bitter zap on our bodies, she said, we would be spared because the devil and its cohorts didn't have a taste for something bitter.

Observing this much hatred on moral policy, we all hastened to Club that couldn't be golfed so if and because it would cause black spots on our ear-skin like we were a cotton mangoes. And by way of feasting, we had nothing on Good Friday but my mother's bitagat (glutinous rice) with sugar and a dozen of the size of the fist or fistful the size of my thigh. This made me look forward to Easter Sunday when, as Protestants, we had sumptuous service at the beach and potluck picnic and egg hunting.

But I hated it! (If read by the sound of Lolo Pitoning's marching my jump at the stroke of each night when Anna walked out of the nipaliths, silently threw dirt on the Bible and after the guards had made chop-chop of his guttmom. She said the higher I jumped, the taller I became. My cousin, who's now in the States, did the same except that because of 1.8, she was already 6'6".

Jesuschrist! I feel sad that Omo Hilgion traditions are now dead and buried. But sentimental fool that I am, I look forward to the day when they will be resurrected for all they're worth. Meanwhile, I see people going on the beach to outer and pig out on food and wine as scandalized from 123 years ago. Good Friday making me article for all the fellows things Lolo Pitoning said about mamma is some fine, even just for once.

E-MAIL the author at mmoribe@yahoo.com

Those humpy-bumpy highways of Lanao del Sur

By Rex Gudiosa Ortega
Marawi, Lanao del Sur

IF YOU are a politician on the campaign trail and are about to hit the road in Lanao del Sur, be warned: prepare for a bumpy-bumpy ride.

The reason? Concrete bumps. Lots of them.

In a recent 40-kilometer drive from Marawi City to Malabang town, on the eastern side of Lake Lanao, we counted 60 concrete bumps (and this we base on a subdivision in sight). That is like three bumps for every two kilometers of the highway — the national highway, that is.

Most of these concrete bumps used to be located on a stretch of highway passing through a clump of houses or schools. They came in twos or threes and are usually placed five or 10 meters apart.

Concrete bumps get the attention of motorists because they hurt both vehicle and its occupants when hit at high speed. Their purpose is clear: to discourage overspeeding.

And in this part of the province where highway patrolmen are like hen's teeth, there is an over-abundance of schemes from said Andanan's morning by to have passes and have I'll vote.

At last, they say the Maranao public transportation driver is a true blue speed demon. They like to overtake all the vehicles in front of them, overtake on curves, honk their horns, and rowdy their passengers with their taxing antics. They also tend to look very young.

With all these screaming through the highways on a daily basis, and with the authorities allegedly doing nothing about it, residents are taking the law into the highway construction work in their own hands by making all these concrete bumps, all in an effort to avoid becoming a road kill he speed demonsters.

Ismael Rahid Mip, who lives along the highway in Marale, said the concrete bumps are there to prevent accidents because there have been a lot in the past.

"Hindi natin sila masisi dahil maraming mga batang naglalaro sa daan. Ow can't blame [the motorists] because there are a lot of kids who play along the road)," he said.

Riding pedestrians is, of course, an incident any motorist would like to avoid, but to hit a child on the highways of Lanao del Sur would indeed be unpardonable for him. And motorists here are aware of that.

Mip said the residents put up the amount needed to construct the concrete bumps or a more municipal member of the community, like a chief tan, shoulders the cost.

If no money is available, wooden bumps are used. They are usually strips of a coconut tree trunk but they look pretty much like the real thing, nonetheless.

Humps making has become part of the people's "highway survival" culture, but many motorists are still concerned about the danger concrete bumps pose to them and their passengers.

"If you don't see them on time you might lose control of your vehicle and, well ... you die!" Bobby Tuazon, a photojournalist who travels a lot, said.

"These concrete bumps can also damage your vehicle's suspension," he added.

There is also evidence of some of these concrete bumps being removed. This is usually the case near military detachments. Soldiers seem to dislike bumps more than the average motorist. In fact, there is a story that may explain this.

Several years ago, an army truck was racing through the highway on the western side of Lake Lanao carrying a wounded soldier to the hospital when it hit one of these concrete bumps.

The wounded soldier fell out of the vehicle and as many dragon—he died. Several other soldiers were also allegedly injured on that occasion.

But soldier or not, if you're a motorist driving on the highways of Lanao del Sur, be prepared for a truly bumpy ride.

As one Maranao property driver put it: "Ay-di, mesal-ol!"

IT'S 'PAK!' Some of your apple-wheat palms are selling briskly for the Sabbath to bring to churches today to be blessed and hung in their homes to ward off evil spirits throughout the year.

'Before true healing, we have to be wounded'

From page A1

Gibson's movie makes it clear that, out until Mel's ending won't be so happy as that. As his viewers and critics in bid seat to be watching Jesus being humiliated on the screen, the viewer realizes that he too must be wounded before he is truly healed.

To make sure that we don't miss his moving point, Gibson puts Jesus in plastic! by Ave Maria through the swinging him screamed out within an inch of his life, humiliated to the core of his being, and debased to the level of inhumanity.

Some viewers object to this over-lived version, but a little talent from scriptures in the film's pre-critique says it all: "By His wounds, you are healed."

That's it: wounds, not mere bruises—deep and horrendously painful gashes that would make most men beg piteously for mercy. And yet Christ accepted the agony without protest, introducing Himself for wounded veins.

Filmmaker's priority

Some people may see Gibson's approach as overly graphic, repetitive to the point of redundancy, and not very sophisticated. But the director apparently have been viewers: it's nothing less than a dynamic re-enactment Christian faith.

In this, "Passion" succeeds with power and distinction. Helping the production touch viewers' lives is the quick cuts from the crucifixion to provides between its big religious and political set pieces and some-what to flashback vignettes that show Jesus, Mary and the apostles in "ordinary" people.

These intimate scenes make the institution of redeemer suffered for Jesus all the more terrible to behold). They also enable the production to go beyond the passe stereotypes of the biblical "bathrobe dramas" of old, and make the New Testament relevant to our lives today.

Distraction

Despite the film's obvious strengths, some characters remain. The production's sound-track and director scoring are too busy and loud, disturbing the introspection needed for this spectacular to choose.

The notational uses of the Dreidah Promise, while dramatically sound, is ultimately too arty and distracts from the integrity of the film's more natural and unselfconscious modes of presentation. Gives for some of the visual effects employed in film's end.

Some touches are just too repetitive. Mar Christ being made to fall to the many times on the road to Calvary.

A number of significant characters are too symbolically bruised, as they don't come through compellingly as people. This makes the production's rare turns from naturalism to operbolism is too jagged a manner.

On the other hand, "Passion" offers numerous visible visualizations, an expressive use of red, an judicious selection of biblical passages cut evasive to the throne of Christ's self-sacrifice, and clear-cut, easily-grasped depiction of the central characters of Jesus and Mary.

Charismatic performance

As Jesus, Caviezel focuses on his charismatic human side, turning up quite a charismatic performance. But he isn't above being terrified, tormented and pushed close to despair when he is at death's door.

In fact part, Maia Morgenstern focuses on Mary's own maternal passion, as she watches her Son undergo the salvific drama that was plotted out for her from three decades earlier. Both in her great sorrow and triumph, she organizes to the divine plan, no matter how it somehow has cost.

A great deal has been made, both positively and negatively, of Gibson's decision to intensify his film's defining sense of time and place by having his characters speak in the "dead" languages of Aramaic and Latin, with some English subtitles provided.

After viewing the finished film, we agree with Gibson's "value" decision. Surprisingly enough, the use of "dead" languages makes the film seem uniquely alive.

Indeed, there is a long series of sequences in which no English subtitles are employed, and communication and experience don't seem to be impeded, as the ancient languages draw viewers deeply into the sensual story the film is telling.

Gibson's faith

Over and above aesthetic considerations, however, "Passion" is a memorable viewing experience because it draws to reality, not from Gibson's strengths as a filmmaker, but from a deeper source, all the way down to his heart and soul—his faith.

Only when taken on this elemental, spiritual level can Gibson's film on Jesus be fully appreciated on its own terms. He did not set out to make his cinematic masterpiece, but to use the big screen and his clout as a film icon to testify his Savior's life and sacrificial death as a necessary reminder for all forgetful and self-satisfied.

"Passion" urges us to be reminded, moved and transformed, to re-live Christ's life on earth not just as tribute to Him, but also as our lives. If we are thus moved, Gibson's daringly spiritual cinematic gamble could have come out a winner, in the in service of the word.

'Jesus Christ suffered, died so we don't have to'

From page A1

is faithful to the biblical story.

The inadequacy of one people's education to the faith will ensure that the distinction between the Bible as a "document of faith" and as a "document of fact" will escape most of them, and apart from a few or two casting Jews in a bad light in the "Passion" song during Holy Week, we're taught to really had a history of anti-Semitism.

However, there is also some criticism of the movie that might be worth considering as it begins its local run. It is exceedingly violent.

The scourging at the pillar which, ironically, was the most historical portrayal of Roman treatment of prisoners, was too brutal and lasted too long.

While most criticisms of the film's violence have been psychological, a sociological critique seems more appropriate for Filipinos.

The Filipino belongs to a poor nation where religion excites more of life. While often regarded as a source of strength and hope, this same religion also results in an emasculating mentality of victimhood.

Loss of suffering

Many Filipinos can easily identify with Jesus's thin, gaunt face. Hispanic blood and poor religion.

At the film shows is a reason of Christ that looks like Jim Caviezel on the cross in "Passion." There's nothing beautified or edifying about it: Nor an inch is without text.

But what Filipinos still not identify with it, or fail to see himself through the lens of suffering and pain? Point out two third famous Filipinos, the Hunyores and the Santos Huerta, reflect our vision/division with Christ weighed down by life.

The Philippine Holy Week is one of fantasy, not for its piety, but for its bloody flagellants and actual crucifixions that identify with pain to its most literal and physical extreme.

Missing the point

Filipino religiosity can make suffering appear as an end in itself, just as Gibson's obsession with pain focuses the point of Christ's passion in the scriptures. It doesn't end in itself but leads inexorably to the resurrection.

Gibson's story leads to the dead Christ entombed by Mary. And while there is a resurrection scene at the end, it comes across almost as an afterthought, a mere footnote to the sculptor experience of pain and dying.

Detached from the resurrection, the suffering and death of Christ becomes a tragedy. Worse, it does tremendous violence to the triune human capacity to rise above defeat.

Losers and defeatists can easily identify with "Passion," not out of pious, but "since a deep lack of faith in their selves. Obsession with pain and suffering makes the resurrection a "pie in the sky" and religion, an "opiate of the masses."

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METRO
Editor Alberto S. Libunao

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WPD tags sneaky robbery suspect

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE METRO POLICE DISTRICT (WPD) said one of the three men who sneaked into the Presidential Bank and Trust Company on Espeleta, Manila, had previously been arrested for a robbery in Cavite.

Sr. Insp. Benjamin Reyes, head of the WPD Theft and Robbery Section, yesterday said that an employee of the Sunvale Lodge, which the suspects used as a jumping board for the robbery, identified the suspects from the police's rogues' gallery.

The suspect, whose name was withheld pending follow-up operations, was arrested in Rizal's capital for a robbery in Cavite. Reyes said the man was a member of one of several bolt cutter gangs operating in and out of Metro Manila.

Photographs

"We have identified one of the suspects through photographs shown to the lodge's staff," Reyes told in a phone interview.

Reyes said the Sunvale Lodge employee told police that the man she pointed to was one of the men who sneaked into the said lodge at around 6 p.m. on Thursday. The men had only rented a room for 12 hours.

The suspects entered the Presidential Bank, which was adjacent to the lodge, in the corner of Espeleta and Picazo Sts., by cutting a hole on the ceiling of one of the lodge's rooms.

The robbery then cut another hole on the bank's roof before going into the bank via a bathroom window.

ON BELMONTE'S ORDERS

QC goes easy in anti-vending drive

By Tina Santos

HAILING sidewalk vendors for one more week the election campaign, Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte has ordered that all anti-vending drives be cleared with him first.

In a phone interview, Belmonte said he had ordered the QC Department of Public Order and Safety (DPOS) to remove a clearance from him first before going after illegal vendors in the city.

The mayor, who is seeking reelection in the May 10 polls, said the new order was effective.

"I don't want them to embarrass me," the mayor said, explaining that "most people from DPOS are here to [people of former mayor Feli Mathay.

Belmonte then cited Mario Sanchez, DPOS assistant division head, as one of those taken to be perceived as leaning towards Mathay, who is again seeking the mayoralty seat.

"Kung di lang naman election [that's not here for the clearance] I would [not] have to do these jobs, but it's election time, maraming na (I don't want to take any chances)," the mayor added.

But while Belmonte early in-ordered the DPOS to clear their operations with him, several officers from the department are saying a different thing.

"Right now, all our operations have been suspended," one of the officers said, referring to the demolition of structures erected by squatters, and the chasing of illegal vendors.

The officer claimed, "We have no choice but to comply with the order," adding that they were now focusing more on traffic management.

Ahmad Sahalee, head of the DPOS, denied that there was an instruction for them to halt the anti-sidewalk vending drive because of the election.

"There was no such thing (order to stop). In fact, we've been conducting sidewalk clearing operations daily," Sahalee said.

Mario Sanchez, DPOS assistant division head, meanwhile, admitted that they were now "somewhat deliberate in conducting operations."

Flood control affected

"But this is because we have yet to facilitate a complete and total relocation plan for these vendors. This is not election-related," he insisted.

But DPOS officers interviewed by the Inquirer insisted that even the flood-control program, which was supposed to start during the summer, had also been suspended because of the elections.

The group has entailed the demolition of squatter shanties along esteros and other waterways.

"We were told to just counter with such operations after the elections on May 10," another source disclosed.

Vendors are back

A check made by the Inquirer showed that throngs of illegal vendors had returned to their stalls along Commonwealth Avenue, Philcoa and Cubao.

Most of the hundreds in these areas are believed to be QC residents living in one of the many depressed communities in the city.

Earlier, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority under Chair Bayani Fernando expelled the vendors from there (MMDA).

However, Fernando announced that they were pulling out of the anti-vending drive weeks into the election campaign period.

HORSE THOUGHTS
The driver of this calesa found another use for a campaign sticker by turning it into a coastmade for his horse.

MMDA says operators' demands are abusive

By Margaux Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) did not favor the request of a group of bus operators to scrap its emission-testing program.

In a memorandum to Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board Chair Ernesto Lacanilao, the agency's chair, Bayani Fernando, said the suggestion presented by the bus operators' "may only have some temporary beneficial and abusive effects on the public sector."

Overpass, underpass

Apart from scrapping the Bus Emission Apprehension Program, the bus operators are also requesting that they only be given the option to pass through overpasses and underpasses on EDSA.

The operators also asked for the suspension of the impounding of bus cards.

Lacanilao said that the MMDA already gave buses exclusive use of EDSA's yellow lane.

"Now they also want the exclusive use of another lane to passing through the overpasses and underpasses," Lacanilao said.

He added, "We have also going easy to the proposal would already be tantamount to giving them exclusive use of EDSA."

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios echoed Lacanilao's sentiment.

Coding suspension

Vergel de Dios said that because of the suspension of the number coding on EDSA, the private bus lines apparently will add more vehicles.

"These operators demanded [that the number coding be lifted so they could deploy their extra units," Vergel de Dios said. "Now they want an extra lane because the [private bus] is apparently not enough for them."

Vergel de Dios stressed that the agency was mandated to secure and implement orderly traffic, especially rainstorm, and not of bus vehicles.

Don't fall victim to burglars, police warn

GO AHEAD, take a break. But be sure to leave your homes safe from burglars while you are away.

This is the advice of National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) Director Hermilo de Leon to Metro Manila residents who are planning to go out of town during the long holidays next week.

De Leon said criminal elements, particularly burglars, take advantage of the occasion, knowing that many residents in the metropolis leave their homes unattended during this period.

"As much as possible, don't leave your house unattended. Have somebody look after it," the NCRPO director stressed.

If no one could be asked to look after a home, De Leon suggested to owners to coordinate with their barangay officials and seek the conduct of regular patrols around their homes.

In Manila, Western Police District spokesperson Cerny Aguacil reminded residents to make sure that their valuables and cloves are locked before they leave.

He added that people should unplug all electrical appliances or even turn off the main power switch to avoid overheating and fire accidents while they are away.

De Leon said he already ordered the deployment of policemen to coordinate with civilian security personnel for the conduct of visibility patrols in homogeneous subdivisions.

At the same time, the NCRPO chief also assured the safety and security of motorists and commuters.

"We will provide assistance to motorists and commuters by conducting intensified security patrols, and providing assistance along major thoroughfares leading to and from summer destinations," De Leon said, adding that they would also ensure the smooth flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

He added that security measures are also in place in various strategic areas, such as bus terminals, the Ninoy Aquino airports, malls and other densely populated areas. Tina Santos and Leila Salaverria

Coding suspension

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METROBRIEFS

2 fall in buy bust

RUANO GIMENE, businessman Anthony "Tony" Ong, alias "Kimpee," 22, of Congress Street, Bicutan, Manila, was arrested with his girlfriend Nissa Rose Cordes, 23, a businesswoman, on Thursday in Bicutan, Manila, and found this her hands, 24, a resident of 9th 30th Street, Pasay City, during a buy-bust operation at the Four Close Bonanza motel in Mandaluyong, Gamboa, at 8 p.m. yesterday. Members Police Drug Enforcement Unit Chief Superintendent Ernesto Francisco Jr. said three bags containing methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) were found from them. Tina Santos

Anti-piracy drive

THE POLICE confiscated 13 units of pirated computer discs and video compact discs and some 2,500 copies of package public labels in a raid conducted on sidewalks and public markets in the Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela area on Friday. The operation was a joint effort of the District Intelligence and Investigation Division, the District Police Intelligence Unit and the Northern Police District, Senior Superintendent Chief Superintendent Francisco said. The Inquirer

Deadly relief

MANNE Bayona, 30, paid dearly for relieving himself on the wall of the Ocean Link Company in Tondo, Manila (which they kept). Bonilla, a pedicab driver from Sta Ana Pulilan Bulacan, was reportedly shot to death by security guard Ricardo Colan, of the 2nd Shell Security Agency and assigned at the Ocean Link Company in Del Pan. Alecia Ilanan

Manila PLEB doubles cases heard, solved

By Tarra Quismundo

THE PEOPLE'S Law Enforcement Board of Manila resolved more than double the number of cases filed against policemen in 2003 compared to 2002.

A PLEB report released Friday claimed that the board resolved 314 more cases in 2003 than it did in 2002.

From resolving only 139 cases two years ago, the board resolved 253 complaints against policemen in the past year.

PLEB Executive Director Emmanuel Hernando attributed this to the training that the board's members went through in February last year, through the help of the Manila City government and the assistance of Team Ang Ladlad, a local think.

PLEB is a quasi-judicial body that hears administrative cases against law enforcers, who have in any way abused civilians.

The Manila board has six districts, each with a five-member board which decides on cases of abuse or misbehavior of policemen.

Commonly, the PLEB receives cases of abuse of authority, illegal detention and extortion.

ON THE LINE
A rescue team of the Air Force demonstrates its skills by "saving" a man from the 52nd floor of the Pacific Plaza Tower inside the Bonifacio Global City.

Workers to seek wage hike

AMID the rising prices of goods and the increase in transport fares, the militant labor group Bilanang Mayo Uno (BMU) said its members would stage a nationwide strike in May to press for a P125 wage increase.

BMU chair Elmer Labog said their decision to hold the strike was reached during a recent meeting of the union's national council.

Labog said unions leaders scheduled with the BMU from Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, Bicol, Visayas, Panay, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao vowed to participate in the strike.

"The need for an urgent wage review is overwhelming. We need an urgent response to our demands as soon as possible," Labog said.

The P125 emergency cost of living allowance granted in 2001 was no longer sufficient to meet their needs, Labog stressed.

"The actual value of the P125 daily minimum wage in [Metro Manila] is only a little more than P200. The national daily cost-of-living now amounts to P355," the labor group leader lamented. Tina Santos

Sunday BIZ

E-mail sr_business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga Baptista

Frustrated artist becomes top investment banker

By Margie Quiroga Baptista

HE seemed to study Fine Arts but discovered he was color blind.

He had always been into acting but never landed at it as a career although it financed his college education.

Since his dad was a lawyer, "naturally I wanted to be a lawyer too." But dad seemed him to be a doctor. He ended up being neither.

"I grew up in a neighborhood in Barrio[illegible] where every boy was an entrepreneur. So I have done my bit as a newspaper boy every Sunday for three years, a sinupap vendor every afternoon for two years, etc.," recalls Rolando P. Cunningham, an investment banker who now heads a Hong Kong-listed healthcare provider.

Despite showing right-brain dominance, footsoldier fell under the influence of his mestizo aunt and pursued a very left-brained course and excelled in it.

He graduated cum laude at the University of the Philippines with a degree in Business Administration.

FIRST JOB

Cunningham is the chief executive officer of a Hong Kong based firm, Get-Rx Holdings Ltd., which owns the chain of Healthway Clinics in the Philippines. He is also a senior general manager for HCH International Ltd., the mother company of GetRx that is listed at the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. HCH owns the Sukhothai in Bangkok and The Bonifacio Residences in the Philippines and makes the Imperial brand of sanitary ware.

ROLLIE Cunningham is married to Isabella Cheng from Hong Kong and has two children.

HE SENT himself through college via acting.

HEALTHCARE in malls is a rare phenomenon that the local market has embraced.

Quiet hand in P12-B deals

But 30 years ago, life was very different for the investment banker who was the point hand involved in over P12 billion worth of business transactions in the Philippines. And although he is now in Hong Kong, as a former Barclays in Hong Kong, PLDT CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan, Gaisano Capital's Gokongwei and Ayala Land's Soriano, Cunningham's credentials are as good.

"I paid for my college tuition by being in the SIP Mobile. That gave me getting performance of boomers for data spending to boot. By taking the BSBA as well as a bunch of necessity and fashion at that time. And when I got involved with the early years of ABSDC in the Philippines, then I was hooked," Rollie states.

After finishing his business degree, Cunningham went to Europe to participate in ABSDC exchange training programs.

He could not recall his first pay but remembers having $500 in his pocket when he left for Europe—money given by a brother living in the US.

In Europe, he worked for several firms under the ABSDC training program—DIC Holland BV, IBM Belgium SA, and Bank Intercontinental SA. He even had a brief visit to the Sumitomo Bank in Japan.

Brazil or an MBA

After five years in Europe, he had two options, still under the MSDC program—go to Sao Paulo in Brazil or pursue an MBA at the Iese Centre for Management Studies, a school set up by the Harvard Business School to provide graduate business programs for the Middle East.

He was all ready and in place for a year, but after graduating with distinction, he went backpacking all over Iran which he described as a beautiful place.

Of course, that was before the revolution where the Shah was ousted and theocratic rule set in.

Just before finishing school, Shah Reza of the Pahlavi line, went to Iran to visit the street and invited Gokongbao to join the investment bank. So agreed and was sent to Beirut to set up a joint venture between the three-year Nazareth Bank and Bancom in Lebanon.

He proceeded to Hong Kong from the Middle East where he became managing director of Arab Asian International Ltd., a merchant banking institution.

Almost two-thirds of his 34-year career was spent outside the Philippines.

His local stints included being director of Benguet Inc. (Philippines), Signetics Phil. Kowell Tube Inc. and Interpak Packaging Philippines Inc.

He set up the Europe Capital

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Micro-entrepreneurs call for domestic trade protection

YOUR life past 35 years, mapanganib pa rin ako sa SM. Bumaba and balance. Pag nandiyan ka pa rin, it's either unemployed, 35 days, 60 days. Pag dumating nang 50 days, another 30 more. 80 days ka yan. Pag nakakuha ng unemployment, magsisimula ang pressure ng pamilya mo, magsisimula ka ng mangutang sa mga kaibigan mo, magsisimula ka ng mangutang sa mga kamag-anak mo. Kung di kaya, magsisimula ka ng magpautang sa mga pwesto mo. Kung magpautang sa mga pwesto mo, magsisimula ka ng mangutang sa mga suppliers mo. Kung di kaya, magsisimula ka ng mangutang sa mga kumpadre mo. Kung di kaya, magsisimula ka ng mangutang sa mga pwesto mo. Kung di kaya

Be entrepreneurs; serve the country

By John Sukrungruang

I WISH I were one of you today, instead of a 77-year-old man, giving a speech you will probably forget when you wake up from your hangover tomorrow.

You may be surprised I feel this way. Many of you are feeling fearful and apprehensive about your future instead.

You are thinking that our country is slipping, so, sliding, into oblivion again, you may be right.

Twenty years ago, we were at par with countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. Today, we are left eating the dust of these countries. You know the facts.

Twenty years ago, the per capita income of the Filipino was $1,000. Today, it's $1,100. That's an gumtical only 10 percent in 20 years. Meanwhile, Thailand's per capita income today is double ours; Malaysia, triple ours; and Singapore, almost 10 times ours.

Phil's globalization coming around the corner, you know it is even more urgent to wake up. The trade barriers are falling, which means we will have to compete harder with our neighbors.

New world

In the new world, entrepreneurs will be forced to invest their money where it is most efficient. Said that is not necessarily in the Philippines. Even for Filipino entrepreneurs, that can be the case.

Pretty soon, we will become a nation that buys everything and produces nothing. We will be like the privileged men who took for granted their country and spent it all. The difference is that we do not have a generous father to run back to.

But despite this, I am still very excited about the future. I will tell you why later.

You have been taught at the throne to be "a person for others." Of course, that is noble. To serve others is a commendable question to know? And my answer is: Be an entrepreneur!

We need young people who will find the idea, grab the opportunity, risk youth, and act under conflict to set up businesses that will provide jobs.

What all, what are jobs?

Jobs are what allow people to feel useful and build their self-esteem. Jobs make people productive members of the community. Jobs make people feel they are worthy citizens. And jobs make a country wealthy players in the world market.

In the order of things, it is the entrepreneurs who have the power to harness the creativity and talents of others to achieve a common good. This should leave the world a better place than it was.

Job creation

Let me make it clear: Job creation is a priority for any nation to move forward.

All right, being from the throne, many of you probably have offers from three companies already. You may even have offers from 20 banks.

I say: Great! Take those offers, work as hard as you can, learn everything these companies can teach and then leave!

If you are planning something great, do not let a 9-to-5 job-rest a high-paying one-lull you into a complacent, comfortable life. Let that high-paying job propel you to world entrepreneurship instead.

Please. I speak of the hardship ahead. I do not want to be unprincipled to you.

Even you Ateneans, who are famous for your eloquence, you cannot talk your way out of this one. There is nothing to do but to deal with it.

I learned this lesson when, as a 13-year-old, I lost my dad.

Before that, I was like many of you in this room: a privileged kid. I went to Cebu's best school, lived in a big house, and got free entrance to the Vision, the largest disaster in Cebu, which my father owned.

Then my dad died, and I lost all those. My family had been in a poor—poor enough to split my family. My mother and five siblings moved in Cebu where the cost of living was lower. I was placed under the care of my friend Uncle Manuel Gonzales, who put me through school. In the next years after, the sun broke out, and every my Uncle Manuel could no longer see the enough.

I was out in the streets, literally.

Challenges

Ironically, looking back, this time was one of the best times of my life. We had everything, true, but we did everybody! What was the great equalizer: In that setting, anyone who was willing to step up the situation, use his wits, and work hard, could make it!

It was every man for himself, and I had to find a way to support myself and my family. I decided to be a modern vendor.

I started by selling simple products in the gathering hall at school by Silay Boarding. After the war, I had saved up P50,000. That was when you could buy a chicken for 20 centavos and a car for P1,000. I was 19 years old.

Now I had enough money to bring my family home from Cebu. Once they were all here, they helped me expand our trading business to include imports. Remember this: the war had left the Philippines with very few goods. So we imported whatever was needed and imported them from everywhere—including used clothes and textile remnants from the States. We were probably the first ukay-ukay dealers here.

Then, when I had gained more experience and built my reputation, I borrowed money from the bank and got into manufacturing.

I started with a notebook plate because I saw at that time, companies like San Miguel needed notebook for their businesses.

That was lucrative for a while, but I began to see that cartonnerie would become a commodity in the long run, so I decided to go into branded goods. I saw that coffee was abundant, and Nescafe of Brazil was too expensive for a country still rebuilding from the war, so my company created Blend 45.

That was the first branded coffee in the country. And from there, we had enough to launch Jack and Jill.

No instant success

From one modest stall, we are now in eight core businesses including retail, real estate, telecommunications, petrochemicals, textiles, banking, food manufacturing, and cattle.

Success doesn't happen overnight. It's the small successes achieved day by day that build a company. So, don't be impatient or for-see-for financial rewards.

Be example, don't be embarrassed that you don't start with a new Toyota Altis. The first motor vehicle I owned was a truck I drove to cattle goods.

I only started flying business class when I got too old to fit in the economy seats.

And I even wore a used swimwear while covering you—I came from my ukay-ukay business. Thank God Elizabeth didn't mind the meatball smell of my swimwear or maybe she wouldn't have married me.

Here what you earn and plow it back.

Don't feel sorry for yourself if you have to work in a low-cost office when your friends are working in high rises.

When my siblings and I put up our trading company after the war, we couldn't afford of the space so we worked where we lived.

One of the products we imported was cotton, and we had to store them in the dining tables in our very house. That was when there was still no solid storage, so imagine how our home smelled!

Don't be ashamed if you have to wait in line for hours to add something, do a secretarial substitute, or work one days just to land a meeting with [illegible].

Don't be discouraged when at first you don't get financing to start your business. Pitch them the next hours for my interview, only to tell me my loan request was disapproved.

Family affair

And never forget your families! Your parents deserve themselves many things in store for you. How could I have succeeded around the world a couple of times with the money they recklessly for your education, and post to-end life, and post-conduct.

Remember them—and bank them.

When you have families of your own, you must come home for Christmas. Spend at least one meal with them, and that will probably be the meal at night, after your children have come in from school and just before your evening out with some business associates.

As it is with business, so it is with family. There are no short cuts for building either one. Remember: no short cuts.

St. Ignatius Loyola, your patron saint, and founder of this 450-year old organization I admire, once lived six ideal Jesuit as one who "lives with one foot raised."

Learning from Jesuits

As Ignatius knew that, to build a successful organization, he needed to recruit and educate men who were not afraid of change but were in fact embrace it.

The Jesuits have another quote, "Make the whole world your home" which means that the ideal Jesuit must be at home anywhere. By adapting to change, but at the same time staying true to their personal beliefs, the history of none has become the long-lasting and successful organization in history and has made all the world their home.

So, let's live with one foot raised in having the new big opportunity: globalization.

Globalization can be your greatest enemy. But it can also be your biggest ally.

We, our governments may not be perfect, and our economic environment not ideal, but our entrepreneurs will find opportunities anywhere.

Look at the young Filipino entrepreneurs who made it. Where I say young, ...and I'm 77 years myself— I am talking about those in their 30s and below. Tony Tan of Jollibee, Ben Chan of Shemis, Nicholas Escudero of Splash Mania, lecturing and Wilson Lim of Mercator.

They're the guys who weren't content with the 9-to-5 job, who were willing to delay their gratification and comfort, and who created something new, something fresh.

Something Filipinos are now very proud of.

In end, globalization is an opportunity of a lifetime... for you. And that is why I want to be there with you instead of here behind this podium—perhaps too old and too slow to seize the opportunities you can.

Let me leave you with one last thought.

Trade barriers have fallen. The only barrier left are the barriers you have in your mind.

So, Ateneans, Class of 2004, heed the call of entrepreneurship.

With a little bit of will and a little bit of imagination, you can turn this crisis into your patriotic moment and truly become a person for others.

"Live with one foot raised and make the world your home."

(This is an abridged version of the commencement speech delivered by the author before the 2004 graduating class of the Ateneo de Manila University.)

GOING HIGH: Challenges graduates to be involved in job creation.

Opportunity knocks but once.

JOB Market

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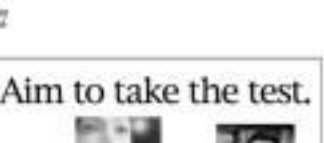
Aim to take the test.



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1. Fill in the complete the application form, complete it and submit it to the AIM admissions office together with the required documents (transcripts, reference recommendations). You may also request them at www.aim.edu.ph
2. Pay the testing fee of P1,000.00 at the AIM cashier.
3. Secure a test permit by presenting your receipt to the admissions office.
4. Come to the testing site on time. Examination starts at [illegible] and ends at 1:30 PM.

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SUNDAY, APRIL 4 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER C1
Sunday LIFESTYLE
Editor Cheiu Banal-Formoso

FITNESS • TUESDAY 2BU • FRIDAY & FASHION • SUNDAY SURPRISES

11-foot version of San Vicente Ferrer, the Angel of the Apocalypse

Winged saint—protector of Filipino homes in the past

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

An antique collection shows early Pinoy Catholics put their trust in saints who would now seem obscure

It seems even religion is not impervious to the Filipinos' penchant for following what is cool.

Almost four decades of collecting religious antiquities and this prominent lawyer, a resident of Quezon City who wants to remain anonymous for obvious reasons, has yet to add an image of the child Jesus to his treasures.

But then his pieces are no younger than 50 years, and the Niño phenomenon—although sweeping—seems to be of more recent vintage.

Of course, given the current popularity of the Niño (and only a few years ago, the Sto. Niño de Tondo, pillars, sun starbursts and even balls flashing), but the all-white, the traditional celebration of the Child Jesus' feast day in Kalibo, Aklan, a likewise staged all-out's, Filipinos will doubtless be among the collectibles soon.

The antique collection, which the lawyer says he started with the first money he earned while still a college student (he bought a pair of angels in his native Bulacan for P500, seems to support two things: One, Pinoys have always been media-ess, hence, considerings of the Virgin Mother (or Mama Mary as many Filipinos prefer to call her) in her various appearances; and, two, even in religion, the Pinoy's "favorite" tend to change.

Favorite doll?

While the Niño may be many people's current object of devotion, if not favorite doll—with costumes ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous—farmer, soldier, jet fighter, tech nut, little prince, Constantine is a revolutionary, etc., that, if not expelled, will soon to shame the wardrobe of Barbie's ex, Ken—early Filipino Catholics put their trust in saints hardly heard of today.

Take San Vicente Ferrer. The collector has found out that the Dominican priest was a constant presence in Pilipino homes in the early days, and was considered a bringer of good fortune and protector from illness.

So popular was San Vicente in earlier times that the lawyer has at least five statuettes of the saint.

The saint, also known as the Angel of the Apocalypse, is usually shown with wings. He was reportedly the patron of builders but as much for warning physical structures but for helping rebuild and strengthen faith.

Missing Niño

The holy family—Joseph, Mary and Jesus—seemed to be another favorite object of veneration. By the time the collector got to the images, however, the Niño lover appeared to have been so full here that the child was often missing.

WHERE'S C2

MADONNA and child

A ST. Augustine with ivory head and hands

IN THIS ISSUE

Reunifying the Christian flock /C3

A kid-friendly resort /C5

WOODEN image of St. Joseph is part of a Holy Family set.

THE "EYE" grows rosiers in the Quezon City house of religious antiques.

THE VIRGIN Mary of the Holy Family

Winged saint— protector of Filipino homes in the past

From page C2

Another favored site by earlier artists and religious was the Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The collection was especially prized of a large painting of the coronation of the Virgin Mary after her ascension to heaven, which used to grace the hall of some monastery.

Also occupying pride of place are images of Mary as the Lady of Peñafrancia, patroness of the Bicol Region, and Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, patroness of Our Mother's Church.

One of the oldest (over a hundred years old) and most expensive pieces he got was the Virgen de Nobleza which, as the name suggests, was often placed in the reception area.

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A SMALL Virgen de los Remedios

THE BEAUTIFUL St. Barbara, who was rescued from the ravished Roman city and her cultus suppressed in 1969

ST. Joseph not wearing his usual green robes

A WOODEN image of the Virgin Mary by a Bohol carver

Pare Pastor encounters an 'angel' in the arcade /C7

Sunday LIFESTYLE

Mission: reunify the faith

Manila will host the first international convocation of the Charismatic Episcopal Church in June

By Elden Cudo

IN THE BEGINNING was the Church, and the Church was one.

But in 1054 AD, a great rift—from happened, fracturing it—arranged over issues of text, liturgy and doctrine, the heads of the Western and Eastern branches of the Church excommunicated each other.

The great schism precipitated by Pope Leo IX and Patriarch Michael Cerularius at least underscored to this day the divide between the "Orthodox" East and the "Roman Catholic" West seemingly never to bridge.

When bloody divisions would follow: The Anglican Church split from Rome over the pope's refusal to annul [illegible] VIII's divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. Martin Luther led a worldwide reformation that gave rise to the Protestant church and its many denominations.

Societal ills

The dream of reunifying the Christian Church, of bringing it back to its original state of oneness, has fired up many generations. The current Pope, John Paul II, has devoted much of his papacy to forging relations with various faiths. He has emphasized dialogue and mutual respect, focusing on the similarities, rather than the differences among congregations of kindred belief.

"Conversion movement" is the term now given to similar efforts by many quarters around the world to reunite all Christians under one Church in the vanguard of this movement is the International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church (ICCEC), which has established a commission that blends the three Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox traditions into one body.

ICCEC adopts major elements of three churches to create a community of convergence and inclusion. It has its own See in San Clemente, California, USA, with Archbishop Antolin Zanoletty (CBC) as the worldwide Patriarch.

Not a Pope, but a Patriarch. It'll be one or more Eastern Orthodox influences in the church, which has its Philippine base in the Cathedral of the King, a three-story [illegible] with a majestic [illegible] of standing Bellanco Street in Mandaluyong City.

The primate for Southeast Asia, Archbishop Lucio Thomas Haun, holds office in a century-old building that [illegible] the Philippine congregation that now counts around 30 churches nationwide. So, ordained priests and bi-ritual bishops. There are also 24 chapters established in six European countries, mostly with Filipino overseas workers as members.

"The beginning of the reconvergence movement was the feeling among many people that some thing needed to be done to bring about unity among Orthodox, Catholic, Episcopalian, Anglican, Evangelical and other believers," says Haun. "The consensus was to begin respecting each other more and work toward becoming one by appreciating what's valuable in each other's church and pulling the [illegible] together."

Integration

The ICCEC liturgy [illegible] celebrates the Eucharist and solidarity.

"Our Mass is like the Roman Catholic Mass, but flavored with Orthodox and Pentecostal characteristic elements," recalls Mass.

An ICCEC Mass is an event set in ancient [illegible] incorporating the dazzling gong and elaborate dance of the Eastern Orthodox rites. However, the substance of the ceremony remains largely Catholic, while the ambience is highly participatory and [illegible] once confined to a Protestant confederation.

"We try to retrieve forms of worship that have been left out," [illegible]

THE CROSS draped with violet cloth during Lent—a distinctly Catholic touch

SHRINE Altar of the Transfiguration of the Charismatic Episcopal Church's Cathedral of the King in Mandaluyong City (above left), which is overseen by Archbishop Lucio Thomas Haun, primate for Southeast Asia (above)

"THEOTOKOS (Mother of God)"

"BAPTISM of Our Savior," an emblematic Eastern Orthodox work of art that coexists with Catholic statuary in the Cathedral of the King

"CHRIST Enthroned"

Mission: reunify the faith

BISHOP Dana Lilly

EAST MEETS WEST. Two images of Christ the King: (top) the traditional Roman Catholic figure, and (right) an Eastern Orthodox-Russian rendition

AUTHENTIC Russian icons of, (from left): Mary, mother of God; Christ Pantocrator (Christ the Lightgiver); and St. John the Forerunner

'Kalbaryos' and Lenten rites in Makati

Music to celebrate Easter renewal

Sunday LIFESTYLE

When innocents come marching into a health resort

You can enjoy a calm and calming Lenten retreat even if you're with the kids at The Farm at San Benito, Lipa

WHEN the [illegible] go marching in, the once-staid health resort comes alive with giggles and laughter.

Text and photos by Lynett A. Vilarifia

WONDERING how to channel the children's energy during the quiet of the Lenten season?

If you have been reading our first issues not to calm and collect all the levels of mind, body and spirit, but could not get to align it with your kids' pleasantly active life, you can solve the riddle April 8 to 11 at The Farm at San Benito health resort in Lipa, Batangas.

Keeping kids busy

While parents take to their spa and wellness programs, a line-up of activities will keep children creatively busy.

Instructors will conduct "art attack" workshops, iron painting and yoga for little climbers. Kids will also enjoy bonding with nature through gardening, seed planting and shoveling. They will also learn to whip up their own food.

For young, active bodies, there will be plenty of swimming in kid-friendly pools. They will also enjoy re-discovered Filipino games, horseback riding and nature trail walks. All of this will be capped by story-telling by the healers and a pajama party in the evening and a grand Easter egg hunt on Sunday.

An array of healthy delicious dishes, including kiddie meals fresh from natural organic sources (but not both delicious and nutritious), will be available in set meals or ala carte at the restaurant.

What's more, children also get to join their parents in a workshop on emotional intelligence and learn "conscious walking" exercises.

Your family's stay is a treasure report, since as you create your own path to wellness. Together, kids learn to exercise the senses of nature cleanup, to smell the flowers and the fragrances of life, and treat the food that is a gift of nature. At healing scents, textures and vibrant energy.

The promenade through the nature, lecture grounds offers a panoramic mountain view, flowing waters, garden walks leading to culinary and fishery tracks of very gardens for group bonding. "Anyone can go to a good book at the library and a tranquil pool to take a dip in the warmed water is

TOURIST explorers take their real live traveled, a nature trail to look for butterflies and dragonflies.

When innocents come marching into a health resort

From page 04

natural springs waterfall in a secluded garden.

Air-conditioned accommodations range from rustic, charming thatched cottages to villas with open-sky showers. The luxury health retreat offers a special family package that includes free accommodation for two children 12 years old and below, plus minimum charges for activity materials.

Close to the Divine

In these days of environmental free-fall and spiritual breakdown, health becomes a luxury. You may wonder how much it takes for you to breathe freely in an idyllic haven sheltered from noise and pollution amidst a green canopy of coconut trees and a lush landscape of flowing water, garden walks and mountain views to bring you close to the Divine.

The Farm is a rare place that lets you indulge in a guilt-free way as you take your kids on the health path away from a toxic environment, their lungs relieved from polluted air, their tasting devoid of processed, unhealthful, chemically laced junk food.

Mothers and fathers get to explore a medically supervised optimum wellness program that employs natural treatments and integrates living food nutrition, a five- or seven-day detoxification, exercise and spiritual development programs, and spa treatments.

Guest chef Kevin Bicker from the United States handles Living Food Preparation and Yoga for Adults.

Call Lipa at 4982177 and 4982750 or the Manila-based Oriental Hotel booking office 7210988 and 7213899. Visit www.thefarm.com.ph or e-mail info@thefarm.com.ph

ON Palm Sunday begins a spiritual journey where coconut palms rise majestically to great sun and mountain.

TINY tot takes long sips of bitter juice of lemon for his dose of antimicrobial soapnuts.

IN LIVING through a textured passway from one enormous to another

ART, this is life! Kiddo visits resort chic enjoys a laugh at unpolished air at The Farm.

THIS must be my real heritage. Little Pilar tries his hand at organic gardening.

CONTEMPLATING: The Passion in the quiet under God's mango tree

FINDING one's cleansing spring hidden in a secret garden.

MOMMY look what I found: Young Nikolas delights in the Easter eggs he hunted the Easter bunny and found again the morning after.

SWANS frolicking in a lake under a golden sun

NATURAL stone wall echoes quiet grace at night's end of a Black Saturday vesta.

EASTER morning walk yields to peaceful evening.

EVERY little girl's dream room

DIRECTOR for marketing Rose Lihuangco hands over the welcome hug card to Hello Kitty

QUIRI bear Selina feels perfectly at home in her cozy new suite at the Westin.

A Kitty of fun

Westin Philippine Plaza offers the Hello Kitty Suite holiday

THE WESTIN Philippine Plaza offers the Hello Kitty fun family package.

A two-bedroom suite is transformed into every little girl's dream bedroom in pristine white and black pink to match the adorable Hello Kitty accessories from the headboard to the bedsheets, table lamps, mirror, wall clock, telephone and television. The theme is repeated in cute bathroom amenities and Hello Kitty snacks and goodies in the mini-bar.

The Hello Kitty Suite Holiday package is available until May 31 in celebration of Kitty's 30th birthday.

Guests availing of the package get a chance to win a fanatic showcase. Qualified purchases at Gift Gate will allow one to join a raffle for an overnight stay in the Hello Kitty Suite.

The family package for a two-bedroom suite is at P12,000 net inclusive of buffet breakfast for six persons, use of the Westin Kids Clubhouse (WKC) for four children, and three raffle coupons.

It is also available as a one-bedroom suite at P7,500 net with buffet breakfast for four, two WKC vouchers and two raffle coupons, while the deluxe room is at P6,750 net with buffet breakfast for two, two WKC vouchers and one raffle coupon.

Call 8528991/93 or 5515555 local 1991 to 93, or e-mail reservations@westinmanila.com.

Holy week hideaway in Subic

WHITE Rock Beach Hotel, a triple A-rated resort hideaway in Subic, offers a number of packages for vacation and reminiscence this Holy Week.

The Holy Week package includes accommodations and breakfast, lunch and dinner gourmet buffets.

Overnighters have a choice of taking their meals by the beach or at the elegant Sunset Cafe, with varied themes ranging from Tuscana Night, Grill Night, Italian Night, Mongolian BBQ Night, Hawaiian Night, Fiesta Filipiniana and Continental cuisine.

Overnight packages will include free use of the recreation areas, badminton and volleyball courts, the newly-installed workout gym, free setup of beach games, ATV private courts and bonfire session by the pool.

White Rock's suite Mabuti Medite tastefully-inspired rooms feature cable TV, telephones, and mini-refrigerators.

"The surroundings are very much secure and keep private for your total relaxation and comfort. Expect to be given a sincere attention and genuine warm welcome by our staff, whose constant goal is to treat guests as family," says White Rock chain George U. Lorenzana.

A wide array of water sports at Camp's Watersports, manned by professional instructors with first-class equipment, allows for jet skiing, sailing, water-biking, snorkeling and boat ride, Scuba diving, parasailing, fishing and other deep sea activities can be arranged with Johnson's downstairs.

WHITE Rock Beach Hotel in Subic offers first-class resort and water sports amenities.

After all the beach excitement, indulge in a soothing massage at the new Wellness Center. Professional facial care, hand and foot spa, and coiled salon services are also available.

Lastly, White Rock has several play areas, kiddie pools set up with slides and water basketball for children's enjoyment. Video games have also been installed for added entertainment. Lifeguards and security personnel are always on hand to ensure the safety of everyone.

Call 4112781/452/569/86 or fax 9212783/85. Visit the website at www.whiterockhi.com.

An angel in the arcade

By Pam Pastor

IT was almost midnight on a weekday. After watching "50 First Dates," my boyfriend and I were in Timezone at Greenhills, trying to outdo each other at the different games.

I beat him at air hockey, he creamed me at basketball. Stuff myself full, we went back to the booth to reload our card. But the arcade gods weren't smiling at us. They were about to down and rebooting wasn't allowed anymore.

Feeling defeated, we went to the claw machine to try our luck one last time. It's go. The prizes had little to no card wasn't enough to buy us one last game.

Suddenly, a man carrying a big black bag appeared out of nowhere. He was holding a bunch of P100 bills and he helped me on the claw machine.

The man motioned for me to start playing. "Sige na, para last ng araw mo (Go on, just last of my day)," he said, smiling.

We smiled back at him. Then I turned to Mr. and we started communicating with our eyes. I could see that he found the whole thing weird. I did too.

I sat down and started playing all the while trying to shake off the strange feeling.

It wasn't easy. My normally overactive imagination became even more active. Was this guy crazy? Why would he do this? Was that little episode about to become a twisted version of Haunted and Grotesque with arcade games substituting for ghosts and freaks? Were Mr. and I going to wake up the next morning all stitched up, organs torn off and sold to public hospitals? (I mean, I watch movies.)

The man stood beside me, swiping the card every now and then. By the time I was done pleasing the first round, he was gone. He had left us with five free games.

Before the five games were over, we got ready to leave. We tried to look for the man so we could thank him, but he was gone.

"Who is an angel?" Mr. laughed. I laughed, but on the inside, I was thinking: Why was it so hard for me to believe that a man could do something like that without expecting anything in return?

And then I realized it wasn't just me.

Disbelief

Last December, I thought about doing a little something for the people who would be working on Christmas Eve. My cousins and I filled goodie bags with sandwiches, packs of juice, peanuts, candies and fruits.

Then, after our family noche buena, we drove around Metro Manila, giving the bags out to drivers of jeepneys, buses and trucks, cab drivers, convenience store salesladies, people manning gas stations and firemen on duty.

Their disbelief as our attempt at spreading joy was evident in their eyes. But most of them were reserved and thoughtful for able words and from both a thoughtful "Merry Christmas." There were those who didn't.

Like the lady at Burger Machine who just treated it as a joke. And the cab driver who refused to roll down his window so I could hand him a bag. He sped away so fast you'd think I was trying to rob him.

That reminded me of that day last year when someone sent me a box of brown sugars just as I was leaving the office because I was feeling extra in love with the world. I wanted to share them—with Gangsta. I guess few to the guards and the man driving the cab I hailed. I dropped by a 24-hour restaurant and offered the pastries to some people sitting near me, but they looked at me like I was trying to poison them.

Forget it, I thought to myself, hiding the box.

I had once last look countless times before. When I ask subdriver to stop by flatbed restaurant and I buy an extra meal for them. Why people watch me pick up stray cats off the streets. When I offer help to total strangers.

The disbelief. The hallowness. The awkwardness. You could almost read their minds: Ano kaya ang problema niya?

When did we become so suspicious and so cynical? Have we all been wanted so badly that we've become almost allergic to kindness? Is the kindness of a stranger such a rare occurrence that we have lost the power to recognize it?

Perhaps this is our society and humans to be able to survive in a variety where everyone seems to have an agenda and everything seems to be somehow oppressed.

Rules

We're all bound the rules—from friends, from relatives.

Don't stop when you see someone with engine problems, that person might try to rob or kidnap you. Don't give street children a single centavo, they're being used by gangs to make money. Ignore anyone who asks you for the time because someone will grab your wallet or bag while you're looking at your watch.

It's sad to be living in a world where the desire for safety may be overwhelming to a campaign for mini-kindness.

For who can blame people for wanting to avoid trouble?

Mind your own business, avoid strangers and save your self at last if grand. Even I have started listening to this—more and more every day.

But that encounter with the man from Time Zone showed me that, yes, kindness still exists. And that was reaffirmed by a cab ride I took a few days later.

The driver suddenly broke the silence and said, "Sino kaya kidlat sa Mo?"

Before I could answer, he handed a discount coupon for McDonald's. It read: "Ayan si Jesus na lang. Binibenta lang. guy sa akin kanina, hindi na nga masabon. Ingat ang mga."

I thanked him and held on to the coupon tightly, for more reasons than the discount.

That encounter reminded me of another driver who found a P10-bill on the floor of his cab. He wanted to split it with me. That almost made me cry. He wanted to split a P10 with me when his mother he was telling me about how big of a struggle it was to send all his children to school.

The cynic in me isn't dead yet. But thanks to the angel from the arcade and the cars sub drivers, it has been wounded. Badly.

Maybe we should start being fit with more bullets. I know that despite race, differences, cruelty and disparity, this world still has more unsung hels.

E-mail the author at your-ate@inquirer.com.ph

A grand betrothal ceremony in idyllic Plantation Bay

CEBU
CEBU

Jaime Picornell

A TWO-NIGHT fete at Plantation Bay marked the betrothal of Lia Feraren and Leo Reznicek of Bavaria (Germany). Lia is the daughter of Joji Feraren of Manila and his Cebuana wife, Teresita "Chiqui" Reyes Feraren. As a child, Lia spent her summers in Cebu with grandparents Ben Reyes and Consuelo Cuenco Reyes.

Leo is the son of Peter Reznicek and Renate Lieva. He met Lia in Germany as they both worked for Siemens, and decided to get married a year ago. Invitations to the betrothal in Cebu this March, as well as to the wedding some June in Bavaria, were sent out last October.

This allowed for travel plans to be made efficiently. Lots of Leo's relatives and friends came to Cebu for the first, led by his grandmother Hildegarde Reznicek, and Lia's maid-of-honor, Arlene Lorenza Prollinger who will be the best man, Arlo Ito, who was in Cebu for the celebration, is Lia's best friend and will be bridesmaid of honor.

First night of the Cebu fete was dubbed "Polterabend," which is the German equivalent of "despedida de soltera." Sid Gandinger's dance troupe performed a variety of Philippine folk dances which delighted foreign guests.

Next day, at twilight, was the betrothal ceremony molded into a holy Mass. The setting was idyllic—on a peninsula of sugary white sand on Plantation Bay's blue lagoon. Tiny rubs of flowers and candles floated about the placid waters which reflected the sky's changing colors at sunset.

Cocktails and seafood delights were served right after the ritual before everyone went to the seashore for dinner. Tents had been set up with flowers and fairy lights. The men were given tiny candles to light when Lia and Leo would come down the torch lit path. The ladies had baskets of petals to toss at them.

Joji and Chiqui were the perfect hosts, assisted by their son Pepper Feraren. Joji's family had come from Manila—parents Antonio and Elena Feraren, Butch Feraren, Mike and Ruby Ampil (nee Feraren). Chiqui, in a pink satin terno and dazzling beaded chemise, was all over greeting her Cebu family.

Ben and Cori Reyes were there, as were Federico Reyes Jr. with his wife Elizabeth and daughter Hilot, Tess and Marylou Reyes with little Anika, Dhang Cuenco Gonzalez was wearing spectacular diamonds herself like some tuchoon fearing Col. Antonio Gonzalez and their children Rhonie and Ellen Gonzalez, Sonny and Lou-Lou Cosajon, with their Christine, Becky and Ronan.

LEO Reznicek and Lia Feraren

Most radiant of all were Lia and Leo, of course. They did not stay long at their assigned seats, hopping as they did from table to table, greeting everyone, and posing for photos.

Guests were impressed with the splendid buffet consisting of Spanish, Filipino and international specialties. An array of desserts were on a separate table. Excellent wines from Gabriel Palmer's Bono Vita were served. The Bisaya tunings performed all night, classic numbers as well as pop music.

The wedding of Lia and Leo on June 19 in Bavaria is set at 10 a.m. at the pilgrim church of Inzeldenkirche in Chiemgau, near the village of Schelling. This will be held in one of the world's most beautiful areas—Lake Chiemsee. A typical Bavarian lunch will be served at the adjacent Seegasthof.

Boat schedules will be distributed for the evening celebration at Frauenwinel. This is one of the three isles on Lake Chiemsee, where Leo's mother Renate went to school. It also holds many memories for Leo who spent summers as a child in this area.

Frauenwinel is Bavaria's smallest municipality founded in 722 by Duke Tassilo II. Seven friar benedictines, whose campanile dominates the skyline up to this day, rose out to disinterring Frauenwinel to gather herbs that grace there in profusion. These are used to make the liqueurs they are famous for.

The third isle on Lake Chiemsee is Herrenwinel, which is famous for the magnificent castle built as a copy of the Chateau de Versailles by Bavaria's King Ludwig II.

JOJI and Chiqui Feraren

RENATE Lieva | FEDERICO Reyes Jr.

ELIZABETH Reyes and daughter Hilot

PEPPER Feraren, Arlo Ito and Lorena Prollinger